

TOWARDS A COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH GRAMMAR  
COURSE FOR CHINESE LEARNERS

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PhD Thesis  
University of Edinburgh  
1992

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is  
my original work and of my own  
execution and authorship.

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4 February 1992



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank first the Sino-British Friendship Scholarship Scheme, the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages, the Overseas Development Administration, and the British Council for making it possible for me to undertake this thesis.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisors, Mr Keith Mitchell, Dr Anthony Lynch, and Dr Alan Davies, who have given me professional guidance, critical comments, and helpful suggestions over the past years. A special word of heartfelt gratitude goes to Mr Mitchell, whose lectures on communicative-pedagogical grammar first (in 1982 in Guangzhou) aroused my interest in the field and who patiently guided and warmly encouraged me through thick and thin to complete this thesis. To Dr Dan Robertson I owe a great debt of gratitude for his generous help with his statistics and computing expertise and friendly encouragement.

I should like to express my sincere thanks to my friends and/or colleagues in China, Britain, and other places, who gave me unfailing support and encouragement during the writing of this thesis. Special thanks are also due to students and teachers in my home university as well as in Britain who completed questionnaires for me. I am deeply indebted to the Youngs (Tom, Yin and George) who have shared my depression and happiness these years. I am particularly grateful to Rosemary Sansome, who has not only given me friendly encouragement but also shared with me her ELT experience in China.

Last, but by no means least, I wish to thank my parents, my parents-in-law, my wife and my son, whose love and support have kept me going for the past years, especially during the difficult stages of writing this thesis. To my son I owe more than I can express in words; I hope that he will later on understand and appreciate the reasons for my absence from home for more than three years.

## ABSTRACT

In the ELT (English Language Teaching) context there have been two interpretations of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) -- the 'weak' version (teaching for communication) and the 'strong' version (teaching through communication). This study explores the feasibility and appropriacy of introducing a weak version of CLT in ELT in general, and in English grammar teaching in particular, at the tertiary level in China. The study is an attempt to lay the foundations for the design of a communicative English grammar course for Chinese English majors, which is intended to complement a communication-oriented general (integrative) course (Li et al, 1987-1989, Communicative English for Chinese Learners), a first Chinese approach to CLT.

The thesis begins with a discussion of issues in CLT: communicative competence, theories of language and learning underlying CLT, tasks and task components, communicative methodology, and syllabus design. It is pointed out that two mainstreams in CLT (i.e., syllabus-oriented and methodology-oriented) can be discerned within the weak version, which are commented on and critically assessed. There follows an examination of the current Chinese ELT situation, which not only suggests that the design of a grammar course is necessary but also reinforces the argument that the strong version of CLT is unlikely to be successful in the Chinese ELT context.

The thesis then describes the design and administration of a survey of Chinese students' and teachers' perceptions of and attitudes to ELT as well as CLT and reports the results, which indicate the desirability of an approach to CLT tailored to Chinese needs. The survey was carried out in Guangzhou, a city in southern China, and suggests that a weak version of CLT is perceived as both desirable and practicable, although allowance may need to be made for the variation in educational conditions and other factors in other parts of China.

In the light of the responses from the survey and the discussion of applied linguistic theories, assumptions and techniques, the author proposes design principles, course components, and task types for the design of a communicative grammar course for Chinese learners at tertiary institutions, illustrating the proposal with commented sample materials. Classroom methodological issues concerning the implementation of the proposed course are also discussed.

The thesis concludes with an indication of issues to be further explored.



# Acronyms and Abbreviations

CECL	= Communicative English for Chinese Learners
CLT	= Communicative Language Teaching
CNESSTE	= China's National English Syllabus for Stage-one Tertiary Education
CEGCCL	= A Communicative English Grammar Course for Chinese Learners
ECP	= English for Communicative Purposes
EFL	= English as a Foreign Language
EGP	= English for General Purposes
ELT	= English Language Teaching
ESCFSE	= English Syllabus for China's Full-time Secondary Education
ESL	= English as a Second Language
ESP	= English for Specific/Special Purposes
GIFL	= Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages
QA	= Questionnaire A
QB	= Questionnaire B
QA1	= Question 1 in Questionnaire A
QB1	= Question 1 in Questionnaire B
TEFL	= Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## 0 INTRODUCTION

### 0.1 Introductory Remarks

This study attempts to investigate Chinese students' and teachers' perceptions of, and attitudes to ELT with regard to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and its application to teaching English grammar at tertiary level in the Chinese context. The outcomes of the research are guidelines and sample materials for a grammar course for Chinese tertiary learners of English, comprising a practice book and a reference grammar book. This introduction will (a) look at some key terms for the thesis, (b) discuss the research questions addressed by the study, and (c) describe the organisation of the thesis.

### 0.2 Main Definitions

As it is often the case that the same term is used to mean different things, it is necessary to define some of the terms used in the present study, and in particular to explain their use in the title of the thesis.

#### 0.2.1 'Communicative'

Since the 1970s, a great deal has been said and written about CLT. The word 'communicative' has become so emotive that it is now difficult or even impossible to find approaches which claim not to be communicative (cf. Nunan 1989a:12) and it is now an insult to imply that

someone's approach is uncommunicative (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:23). The term 'communicative' is sometimes used as if it were synonymous with 'functional' (e.g., Yalden 1983a, 1987a; Quinn 1984; Rea-Dickins and Woods 1988). Recently, Widdowson (1990:117) and Johnson (1988a:58) have pointed out that the term 'communicative' has been bandied about so freely that it has lost its original meaning.

In the present study the term 'communicative' is used to mean 'relating language to its use'.

Since the principal function of language is communication, the teaching of English certainly should be primarily, at least, for communicative purposes. In order to achieve that aim, students should be taught how to use language in real-life situations. The traditional approach<sup>1</sup> is often said to be ineffective in achieving this goal. Discontent with the traditional approach has thus brought about the communicative approach<sup>2</sup>, which aims to teach learners to use language in real-world communication.

#### 0.2.2 'Grammar'

In language education, grammar has been at the core of teaching and learning, and grammar is universally regarded as far more powerful in terms of generalisability than any other language feature (Davies 1978/1982: 151).

It is generally acknowledged that the learning of a language inevitably involves acquiring the ability to deal with its grammar. However, it has been noted that the introduction of CLT has often been accompanied by a devaluation and/or a rejection of grammar as one of the main components in the language teaching curriculum (cf. Rea-Dickins and Woods 1988:623).

There are applied linguists and language teachers who have put forward strong arguments for the place of grammar in CLT. Widdowson, for example, observed that there is a 'false and damaging assumption' which has taken root in people's minds in recent years that communication and grammar are in opposition and that 'a communicative approach to the teaching of language bypasses grammar and makes it unnecessary' (Widdowson 1984c:4). He strongly argues that

Nobody can learn a language without learning its grammar, for it is the grammar which represents the essential resource for making meaning in language use. Any attempt to teach a language without creating conditions for grammar learning is doomed to failure. (Widdowson loc. cit.)

Canale and Swain, and Carroll, after reminding us that 'there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (Hymes 1972:278), warn us that 'there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar' (Canale and Swain 1980:5) or that 'there are rules of grammar without which the rules of use would be inoperable' (Carroll 1980:8).



The word 'grammar' has many different meanings (see Greenbaum 1988); the term 'grammar' in the title of the thesis is mainly based on its more restricted sense of 'morphology and syntax', but recognising all the time that grammar interacts closely with meaning. In this thesis I take the view that the main function of the grammatical system is to encode meaning choices in context, rather than operating as an autonomous system to be learned for its own sake (cf. Celce-Murcia 1991).

### 0.2.3 'Course'

In the present study 'course' is used to mean 'programme of study'. Within the proposed course, there will be a grammar course (practice) book, which will be used as a textbook in class, and a reference grammar book for learners and teachers, which will be used for consultation purposes outside class. However, the present study will focus on the course book rather than the reference book, because the former is needed more immediately than the latter in the present context of ELT in China (see Sections 5.6, 5.8 and 6.6).

### 0.2.4 'Chinese learners'

The world's largest population of English language learners is in the People's Republic of China (Li 1984b:2). There are a number of reasons for bringing 'Chinese learners' into prominence in the present study. Linguistically, the mother tongue of Chinese learners is



Mandarin, which is more an isolating language than English (cf. Lyons 1977:72-73). Therefore, Chinese learners of English have special difficulties in learning the language, because Chinese and English are entirely different in many aspects (e.g., the article and reference system, the tense-aspect system). From an applied linguistic perspective, models of language, language teaching and learning are consumer-based and 'would vary according to the kind of language user concerned' (Widdowson 1980:169). There is no universally applicable model in language teaching and learning (Johnson 1978:25-26). The recognition of the consumer-based learning models can be traced back to the early 1920s, when Palmer made the following remark:

We cannot design a language course until we know something about the students for whom the course is intended, for a programme of study depends on the aim or aims of the students. (Palmer 1921/1964:129)

From a user's point of view, Chinese learners have their own needs and expectations, and learning styles (see Chapters 5 and 6). Therefore, it is not only legitimate but also necessary to relate the teaching of English to the Chinese context.

The 'Chinese learners' in the title of the thesis are second-year English majors on a four-year degree course at a Chinese university<sup>3</sup> who have learned English for about seven years (six years as a school subject in secondary school and one year as a major at university).

### 0.3 Arguments of the Thesis

In this section, two issues will be addressed: (a) the research questions of the present study, and (b) the organisation of the thesis.

#### 0.3.1 Research Questions

My main research question is:

What are Chinese students' and teachers' perceptions of and attitudes to ELT in general and CLT and a communicative approach to grammar teaching in particular?

This question leads step by step through five related questions:

##### 1. What is CLT?

To answer this question, one must consider aspects (e.g., the aim, theory of language and theory of learning, characteristics, syllabus design, and methodology) of CLT. In order to relate CLT to ELT in the Chinese context, one must look at the ELT situation in China. Thus the second question arises:

##### 2. What is the ELT situation in China?

On this issue, this thesis will (a) review the existing literature, both empirical and speculative, on ELT in China and (b) report the results of a survey designed in line with the main research question raised earlier. The discussion on aspects of ELT in China leads back to the main research question, therefore the third question is:

##### 3. What are Chinese students' and teachers'

reactions to CLT and its application to ELT in general and grammar teaching in particular?

The survey which was conducted in Guangzhou, a city in southern China, will provide important information for the design of the proposed course. This in turn gives rise to the fourth question:

4. What are the implications of the survey?

By looking at the results of the survey, I am in a better position to argue for the design of a communicative grammar course for Chinese learners. This raises the last question:

5. What should a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners be like?

In attempting to answer these five questions, I decided to focus the present study on the following objectives:

- (1) To identify one type of CLT which is likely to be most appropriate to the Chinese ELT context.
- (2) To report on research into the Chinese ELT situation, including my own survey on CLT and grammar teaching in particular.
- (3) To suggest a design for a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners based on the implications of my own survey.

I now begin to discuss the first research question and the first objective outlined above. As discussion of CLT inevitably involves the concept of 'communicative

competence' because this term is generally adopted to describe the aims and objectives of CLT (Howatt 1988:19; cf. Johnson 1981a:10), the thesis begins with a discussion of the notion of 'communicative competence' by tracing its origin and studying its meanings and components. It is argued that the term has two senses, one being technical and abstract and the other non-technical and concrete. In the field of applied linguistics, it is the concrete and relative sense (i.e., 'competent communicative performance', as Howatt (1988:19) puts it) that is of interest and relevance to language teaching. Then the thesis goes on to examine the components of communicative competence. One of the key questions here is the concept of grammatical competence and its relation to other components of communicative competence. It is pointed out that because grammatical competence is regarded as part of communicative competence our view of grammatical competence has altered and enlarged because grammatical competence is not seen as in opposition to communicative competence but as an essential part of it and because the study of grammatical rules involves the consideration of sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse, and strategic rules.

Having discussed the issue of communicative competence, the thesis turns to CLT. First of all, it examines the motivations for the communicative movement. Then, by looking at the distinction between the weak

version and the strong version (Howatt 1984, 1988) and their theoretical bases as well as the Chinese ELT context, it is argued that it is the weak version (i.e., teaching English for communication rather than as or through communication) that is more likely to be appropriate in China. As there are two directions (mainstreams) in the weak version (one of which focuses on the syllabus, represented by the work of Wilkins and the other on methodology, associated with the work of Widdowson), it looks at them critically, pointing out that both mainstreams leave room for improvement. Following that, the theory of language and the theory of learning underlying CLT are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of CLT and its communicative features. As 'task' is an important concept in CLT and in the proposed course, the concept is then examined in detail -- its types and components. Then, the thesis goes on to deal with communicative teaching methodology, which is followed by arguments for the status of grammar in CLT since the present study is concerned with grammar teaching in a communicative framework. Finally, it looks at some problems with CLT itself as well as with its application.

As the communicative movement began with the design of notional/functional syllabuses, the thesis is then directed to the issue of syllabus design, because the present study is concerned with the design of a course. Three types of syllabus (structural, situational,

notional/functional) are identified and their relationships with form-meaning-use are then exemplified. Since it is generally believed that in a communication-oriented programme a notional/functional syllabus is potentially superior to other types of syllabus, some aspects of this type of syllabus are discussed and the complexity of form-meaning correspondences is analysed. The relationship between syllabus and methodology on the one hand and syllabus and CLT on the other are also highlighted. The above issues are discussed in the first part of the thesis.

Having set the first objective and outlined the related discussion, I turn now to the second objective, which is to report on research into the Chinese ELT situation, including my own survey on CLT and grammar teaching in particular.

Related to the first part of this objective are issues such as the history of ELT, favoured teaching strategies/techniques and learning styles, the practice of classroom teaching, reactions to the communicative movement in China, the national English syllabus for China, the teaching of grammar in China, and a Chinese approach to CLT. Much has been written about ELT in China and the Chinese way of teaching and learning English has been described as 'classroom-centred', 'teacher-centred', 'textbook-centred', 'grammar-centred', and 'memorisation-based'. From the existing literature

on China's ELT, one might think that it is impossible to implement a communicative approach to ELT in China. However, as most of the arguments are based on speculation rather than empirical studies, it is too early and risky to draw any conclusion. The main question to be asked is what Chinese teachers' and learners' attitudes and reactions to CLT and its application to grammar teaching are and whether they prefer communication-oriented teaching to structural teaching. Therefore, it is essential to investigate their perceptions of and attitudes and reactions to CLT and its influence and/or realisation in teaching grammar and see how receptive the teachers and learners are likely to be to CLT. To do this, a survey was designed in the hope that it would collect information for the study. The survey was conducted in the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages (GIFL). By using two questionnaires (one for teachers and the other for students), it was possible to elicit responses concerning teachers' and students' perceptions of and attitudes to the communicative approach and communicative grammar teaching. The questionnaire is made up of two parts -- questions and exercise types -- and is analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. In the analysis of the results, learners' responses and those of teachers are compared where necessary. By studying the answers and results of the questionnaires, the thesis argues for and proposes a Chinese approach to communicative grammar



teaching. This gives rise to the last objective:

To suggest a design for a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners based on the implications of my own survey.

After reviewing the relevant literature and the Chinese ELT situation and studying the responses to answers and results of the survey of Chinese teachers' and learners' attitudes, needs and expectations, the thesis addresses practical issues involved in the design of the proposed course -- A Communicative English Grammar Course for Chinese Learners (CEGCCL). This is discussed in the third part of the thesis. This part begins with the motivations for the design of the course; it attempts to answer the question 'Why do Chinese learners need a communicative grammar course?' from three angles. Then the thesis looks at the nature of the course, and the underlying question: 'What is the relationship between CEGCCL and Communicative English for Chinese Learners (CECL) ?'. It is also pointed out that CEGCCL is basically a remedial course because what students are expected to learn, to a large extent, has previously been covered in the secondary school English course. Following that, four components of CEGCCL are proposed, which are 'approach', 'design', 'procedure', and 'evaluation'. Then, three general design principles (learning-centred, task-based, grammar-specific) are suggested and exemplified. It is argued that the first two principles have more to do with 'communicative' while



the third principle is concerned with 'grammar', because the proposed course is a 'communicative grammar' course. Having discussed the reasons for the course, its nature, its components, and its design principles, the thesis turns to the issue of 'tasks' which are argued to be an important element in CEGCCL. First, four types of tasks are suggested, which are followed by examples. Then sample tasks are analysed in terms of task components as well as the suggested design principles. Finally, the issue of the methodology of the proposed course is examined in terms of materials writing and classroom teaching procedures as well as general methodological issues.

The questions and objectives discussed so far are the main threads of the thesis. The discussion enables me not only to answer the five questions and realise the three objectives but also to draw my general conclusion: A certain type of communicative approach to grammar teaching is appropriate to the Chinese ELT context so long as there are suitable teaching materials and well-trained teachers available, which indicates that further research must be done in materials writing and teacher education.

### 0.3.2 Organisation of the Thesis

With these research questions and objectives in mind, the thesis composes three main parts. Part One consists of four chapters: (a) communicative competence,

(b) CLT, (c) syllabus design, and (d) grammar teaching. The first research question is related to this part.

Part Two is concerned with the background situation, and has two chapters: (a) a discussion of the existing literature on TEFL in China and (b) my own survey of the perceptions of and attitudes to ELT of GIFL teachers and students. The second and the third research questions underlie this part.

The last part of the thesis is devoted to the design of the proposed grammar course book and has three chapters: (a) an outline of CEGCCL, (b) an analysis of tasks, and (c) the CEGCCL methodology. The last two questions are at the core of this part.

In the conclusion, some questions and problems related to the application of the proposed course are also examined, with an indication of issues to be further explored.

#### 0.4 Concluding Remarks

There have been many attempts to work towards a communicative pedagogical description of English for syllabus designers and materials writers (e.g., Leech and Svartvik 1975; Leech 1983; Mitchell 1981, 1990a, 1990b; Sinclair et al 1990; Ferguson 1991; cf. Comeau 1987). Such a description plays an essential role in the development of a communicative approach to language teaching. Mitchell (1981:104) stresses the importance of such a description by saying that its absence in a

notional syllabus makes the teaching materials derived from it 'treat language as an accumulation of isolated items ... rather than a generative system of rules'. There are now successful 'communicative' grammar practice books available for classroom use (e.g., Doff et al 1983a, 1984a <sup>4</sup>, de Devitiis et al 1989a, 1989b, Jones 1992; cf. Johnson 1981c, Brumfit and Wendeatt 1984) and valuable guidelines for the development of communicative tasks for the teaching of grammar (e.g., Harmer 1987; Rea-Dickins and Woods 1988; Nunan 1989a).

It is hoped that the present study will make some contribution to the exploration and application of a communicative approach to the teaching of English grammar in general and ELT in the Chinese context in particular.

Part One:  
THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

## CHAPTER 1: COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of 'communicative competence'. First, Chomsky's 'linguistic competence' will be reviewed, and Hymes' 'communicative competence' will be brought into the discussion. Then it will be argued that communicative competence is used in an informal sense, different from Hymes' use, in applied linguistics and language teaching. This will be followed by an examination of the relationship between grammatical competence and communicative competence. Finally, the components and levels of communicative competence will be discussed from an applied linguistic perspective.

### 1.2 Chomsky's Linguistic Competence

Since the notion of 'competence' in Chomsky's (1965) 'linguistic competence' is related to de Saussure's 'langue', it is necessary to begin with a brief discussion of de Saussure's (1916/1983) dichotomy of 'langue' and 'parole'.

#### 1.2.1 Langue and Parole

De Saussure's (1916/1983) 'langue' is used to mean the abstract system of a language; it is the totality of a language, which, theoretically speaking, could be discovered by studying the memories of all the users of a

language (Crystal 1987:407). This abstract system consists of the arrangements of sounds and words which are shared by the speakers of the language. 'Langue' is regarded as the language system which underlies the actual use of the language in a particular language community (Lyons 1977:239); it is never complete in any single speaker but exists only in the collectivity (de Saussure 1916/1983:13). It is stable and systematic. 'Parole', on the other hand, is a dynamic, social activity in a particular speech community; it is used to mean the actual use of language by people in speech or writing. In other words, the concrete data of 'parole' are produced by individual speakers in a speech community (Sampson 1980:46). De Saussure's dichotomy is an important contribution to modern linguistics. It is often said that Chomsky's dichotomy of competence and performance is related to de Saussure's; this issue will be taken up in the following section.

### 1.2.2 Competence and Performance

It was Chomsky who gave prominence to the dichotomy of 'competence' and 'performance' in modern linguistics. He writes that linguistic theory is concerned with the unconscious underlying knowledge of the 'ideal speaker-listener' which operates in 'a completely homogeneous speech-community' (Chomsky 1965:3). He makes a distinction between competence and performance by saying that competence refers to 'the speaker-hearer's knowledge

of the language' while performance is concerned with 'the actual use of language in concrete situations' (op. cit.:4). For Chomsky, competence is an idealisation which has nothing to do with language in everyday use. What he is interested in is a person's internalised grammar of a language, not his actual language behaviour in social interactions. The ideal speaker-listener in Chomsky's mind is one who would have a complete knowledge of the whole language. The actual use of the language by individuals -- what Chomsky calls performance -- is not what he would consider an appropriate concern of linguistic theory. Chomsky's concept of 'competence', as Taylor (1988:153) puts it, has nothing to do with language use, nor ability to use the knowledge represented as competence.

Chomsky's competence is a static and absolute, rather than dynamic and relative notion; it concerns 'product', not 'process' (Taylor 1988).

It is generally believed that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance is similar to de Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*,<sup>1</sup> as both de Saussure and Chomsky believe that what is linguistic can be separated from what is non-linguistic and that the study of language can be based on an assumption that there exists a homogeneous speech-community (Lyons 1981:234). However, for de Saussure *langue* is a social concept and the repository of *langue* is the speech community; it 'exists perfectly only in the

collectivity' (de Saussure 1916/1983:13). By contrast, Chomsky's competence is a concept devoted to the individual (and an attribute of the individual) and the repository of competence is the 'ideal speaker-listener'. De Saussure's distinction is basically sociolinguistic, while Chomsky's distinction is basically psycholinguistic.

### 1.2.3 Three Main Responses to Chomsky's Dichotomy

Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance has aroused a great deal of interest and criticism among linguists and applied linguists. Up to now, there have been three main responses to Chomsky's dichotomy. For those who are interested in transformational-generative theories, the distinction is useful and necessary for the consideration of the system of rules of the language. It is competence rather than performance that should be the object of linguistic inquiry.

The second response is that of Halliday, who rejects the distinction as 'unnecessary if it is just another name for the distinction between what we have been able to describe in the grammar and what we have not, and misleading in any other interpretation' (Halliday 1970a:145).

The third response is from those who on the one hand accept the basic distinction of competence and performance but on the other hand would wish to modify the notion of the terms. This response is very



influential in that it has pushed forward the communicative movement in language teaching. This view has led to the notion of communicative competence in language teaching.

### 1.3 Hymes' Communicative Competence

In this section the following issues will be discussed: (a) Hymes' use of the term, (b) Chomsky's and Hymes' 'competence', and (c) Widdowson's distinction between competence and capacity.

#### 1.3.1 Hymes' Use of Communicative Competence

One early use of the term 'communicative competence'<sup>2</sup> is in Hymes' work (e.g., Hymes 1971, 1972). For Hymes, Chomsky's dichotomy of competence and performance provides no place for the consideration of language use; it fails to account systematically for whether what we say is appropriate in social interactions. According to Hymes, a complete characterisation of a native speaker's underlying knowledge of the rules of language goes beyond Chomsky's linguistic competence. He argues that linguistic competence is only a part of 'communicative competence' -- the term he used to contrast a communicative view of language with Chomsky's theory of competence. In Hymes' view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge of the linguistic rules of his language and knowledge of social rules and the ability to

use them in the context in which communication is to take place. Hymes argues that an adequate theory of language users and language use would recognise that there are four kinds of judgement to be made by language users in their speaking and writing, not two [i.e., grammaticality and acceptability] only, as was claimed by Chomsky. These relate to whether and to what degree something is (a) formally possible, (b) feasible, given the means of implementation, (c) 'appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context', and (d) actually performed (what its doing entails) (Hymes 1972:281). For Hymes, these four types of knowledge (and abilities) are the components of the actual theory of communicative competence. A person who is communicatively competent has knowledge and ability to make judgements of these four kinds. Hymes also views communicative competence as the interaction of these four parameters; a person who acquires communicative competence has the knowledge of (and ability to decide) 'when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner' (op. cit.:277).

Hymes' 'On communicative competence' (1972) has been so influential in language teaching that 'arguably it gave CLT its name' (Howatt 1988:19; cf. Stern 1983:111; White 1988:17). His remark that 'there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (Hymes 1972:278) has become 'the motto of the communicative movement' (Howatt loc. cit.) in language

teaching.

It must be pointed out that Hymes' communicative competence, like Chomsky's linguistic competence, is an abstract, idealised notion. It does not 'describe how such "competence" is used in actual communication' (Richards 1985a:145), nor is it 'something to be acquired like a new pair of shoes' (Yalden 1987a:23).

### 1.3.2 Chomsky's and Hymes' Competence

As was pointed out earlier, Chomsky's competence<sup>3</sup> is something absolute, not relative; his concept is static, not dynamic; it is concerned with internalised knowledge of systems of rules, not the ability to use language.<sup>4</sup> However, Hymes' competence in his communicative competence includes not only knowledge, but also ability, as he uses competence to mean 'the most general term for the capability of a person' when he says that 'competence is dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use' (Hymes 1972:282, my emphasis).

Hymes has, in fact, enlarged Chomsky's concept of competence (e.g., Brumfit 1984a:24; Yalden 1987a:17; Howatt 1988:19, White 1988:22), as his 'competence' consists of both knowledge and ability while Chomsky's excludes 'ability' (Chomsky 1980:59).

### 1.3.3 Competence and Capacity

Widdowson (1983) argues that the notion 'competence' for both Chomsky and Hymes refers to 'those aspects of

human language behaviour that can be formalised in a model of description' (op.cit.:23), thus implying that human language behaviour 'is determined by rule almost as if humans simply responded to linguistic and sociolinguistic control' (op. cit.:8); therefore, he proposes the term 'capacity', which assumes that human beings are in control of their own language behaviour and are able to exploit the rules for creating their own meanings at their disposal. According to Widdowson, competence is concerned with rule-governed, formalised human language behaviour in a model of description and it does not account for the user's ability 'to create meanings by exploiting the potential inherent in the language' (op. cit.:8). Capacity, by contrast, is used to mean the ability to create meaning and to exploit language resources which are partially codified and formalised as competence and which are only partially describable in grammars (op. cit.:26). Widdowson, here, is making the claim that both Chomsky's competence and that of Hymes' are static concepts whereas his own 'capacity' is dynamic.

Taylor (1988) on the one hand accepts Widdowson's useful distinction between competence and capacity, and on the other hand assumes that capacity is not a new concept as it is similar to Chomsky's 'creative aspect of language use' (Chomsky 1976:138) and 'creative use of language' (Chomsky 1980:222).

### 1.3.4 Concluding Remarks

To conclude, 'competence' in both Chomsky's 'linguistic competence' and Hymes' 'communicative competence' is a rule-governed, formalised concept; it is idealised, absolute, and static (Widdowson 1983:8, 23, 26; Richards 1985b:5; cf. Howatt 1988:19, Taylor 1988). In other words, both linguistic and communicative competence 'are merely abstractions or idealisations' (Richards loc. cit.). Hymes has extended and changed Chomsky's notion of competence. Therefore, as has been pointed out (Huang 1991a:35), it would be unfair to say that Hymes has improved and rectified Chomsky's notion. In fact, as has been observed by Widdowson (1989:129), 'Chomsky and Hymes are playing in different kinds of game'.

## 1.4 Communicative competence in ELT

When 'communicative competence' is used in an informal sense, it becomes a relative and dynamic concept and it allows different interpretations. This section will discuss the informal sense of communicative competence.

### 1.4.1 The Informal Sense of Communicative Competence

As Hymes observes, the term communicative competence 'seems to have been introduced independently in the study of language teaching and learning' (Hymes 1985:15). The main concern in Hymes' earlier papers (Hymes 1971, 1972)

are theoretical and the learners in his mind are disadvantaged children, not ordinary language learners and his interest is in their 'language problems' (Hymes 1972:269). However, when the term was introduced to the field of applied linguistics and language teaching, it gained new meanings. It has been used in an informal sense to refer to the ability to use the language rather than the underlying system of rules of a language (as in Chomsky's original distinction between competence and performance) or the underlying knowledge of the language system and the ability to use the knowledge (as in Hymes' conception) (Garret 1986; Yalden 1987a:17). Howatt has observed that in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching communicative competence 'was not understood in the neo-Chomskyan sense that Hymes intended but in an informal sense of "competent communicative performance" ' (Howatt 1988:19).

Savignon (1983) proposes that communicative competence is a dynamic concept and 'depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system' (Savignon 1983:8). She also argues that communicative competence is a relative rather than absolute notion; therefore, there are degrees of communicative competence (op. cit.:9). Stern (1983), like Savignon (1983), also regards competence as a dynamic notion: 'competence is active and dynamic, not mechanical or static' (Stern 1983:344). Savignon's interpretation of communicative

competence is also shared by Yalden (Yalden 1987a:25).

In the communicative movement, almost all proponents of the communicative approach believe that the aim of foreign language teaching is communicative competence<sup>5</sup>, as Howatt comments: at all events communicative competence was universally used to describe the aims and objectives of all kinds of CLT (Howatt 1988:19). It is worth pointing out that when communicative competence is claimed to be the goal of second/foreign language teaching, it is only the informal sense, not Hymes' original sense, that is used. Hymes' communicative competence cannot be the aim of second/foreign language teaching because it is an abstract and absolute concept -- to some extent all native speakers have problems with the appropriate use (a component of communicative competence) of their mother tongue (cf. Harmer 1983:23-24, Davies 1989:159-160).

#### 1.4.2 Different Terms and Interpretations

As the concept of communicative competence in language teaching is not used in Hymes' original sense, it can mean different things for different people (cf. McGroarty 1984:257). As is observed by Taylor (1988:161) and Nunan (1988b:34), 'competence' is sometimes used to mean 'performance'.<sup>6</sup> For example, a recent movement in ESL in the United States, competency-based ESL, 'is using "competence" to refer to things learners can do with language' (Nunan op. cit.).



On the other hand, some writers equate 'competence' with 'ability', as can be seen from the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (Richards, et al 1985:49, my emphasis):

communicative competence: the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom.

Others use 'communicative competence' to mean 'skill'. For example, Corder (1973:126) describes it as the 'general skill', whereas van Dijk (1981:17) and Spolsky take communicative competence to mean 'communicative skills': 'it seemed easy to call these skills "communicative competence" ' (Spolsky 1989:139).

Still others (e.g., Stern 1983:229, Savignon 1983:303, Higgs 1984) use communicative competence as a synonym for communicative proficiency. Savignon (1983:303), followed by Yalden (1987a:25-6), defined communicative competence as 'functional language proficiency'.

Paulston (1974:350) regards communicative competence as social rules of language use, whereas Rivers (1973:26) makes no distinction between communicative competence and 'spontaneous expression'.

#### 1.4.3 Distinction Between Competence and Proficiency

Taylor (1988), in a detailed survey of the concept of competence and its 'equivalents', suggests that a distinction between competence and proficiency be made,

using the former to refer to 'some kind of "knowledge" or, better, "state of knowledge"' and the latter to refer to 'something like "the ability to make use of competence"', and that the term communicative competence be abandoned:

Much could be clarified by doing away with the overall term 'communicative competence' which has been so abused that it has lost all precise meaning. (Taylor 1988:166)

He then goes on to say that it would be better if communicative competence were replaced by communicative proficiency. Taylor also argues that if the distinction between competence and proficiency is to be made, then the former can keep its original meaning (i.e., Chomsky's notion), 'having to do with structure, state, or form', and the latter can be used as a dynamic concept, 'having to do with process and function' (op. cit.:166).

Richards (1985b) distinguishes between competence and proficiency by saying that the former refers to 'what we know about the rules of use and the rules of speaking of a language' and the latter to 'how well we can use such rules in communication' (Richards 1985b:5). Like Widdowson (1983), Richards also believes that linguistic and communicative competence 'are merely abstractions or idealisations' (loc. cit.). The idea expressed here is echoed in Taylor (1988:166), already discussed. However, it is interesting to note that Richards' interpretation of communicative competence quoted here is contrary to what he and his collaborators say in the Longman

Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (Richards et al 1985), already quoted in Section 1.4.2 above, in that the Dictionary defines the term as a relative notion, something concrete rather than abstract.

#### 1.4.4 Conclusion

To conclude, there are two meanings of 'communicative competence', one of which is in Hymes' original sense, an abstract, absolute notion, referring to the underlying knowledge of the language system and the ability to use language, the other is in an informal sense, a relative notion, which has degrees ranging from zero to native-like ability in the case of foreign language learners' command of the target language. It is this informal sense that is adopted as the aim of CLT. In the following discussions, only the informal sense will be used, unless specified.

#### 1.5 Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence

Ever since the term 'communicative competence' was introduced to applied linguistics, there has existed a controversial question (Yalden 1987a:23): Is grammatical competence a part of communicative competence? As Yalden (op. cit.) observes, grammatical competence is not included in Jakobovits' (1970a) specification of aspects of language he regards as a part of communicative competence. Moreover, although Allwright (1979:168) accepts that grammatical competence is a part of

communicative competence, he nevertheless points out that some areas of grammatical competence are 'essentially irrelevant to communicative competence'<sup>7</sup>. However, it is now clear that most writers would agree that grammatical competence is a part of communicative competence.

If grammatical competence is regarded as a part of communicative competence, then our view of grammatical competence is altered because it is no longer seen as in opposition to communicative competence. The concept of grammatical competence is 'larger' than it was before the communicative movement in that it is concerned with some aspects of other parts of communicative competence such as sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (see Section 1.6 below); it is also less 'pure' because the study of grammatical rules now involves the consideration of sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic rules. The implication is that in teaching and learning grammatical rules, functional aspects and dimensions of grammatical rules should not be neglected, as they are part of language use. Attempts to design a communicative-pedagogical grammar (e.g., Mitchell 1981, 1990a, Ferguson 1991) are in fact a reflection and manifestation of treating grammatical rules as parts of rules of use.

### 1.6 Components of Communicative Competence

Although there have been many attempts to define the components of communicative competence<sup>8</sup>, there is still

no consensus on what those components are (Yalden 1987a:23-24). However, it seems that most writers nowadays accept Canale and Swain's (1980) proposal of the components of communicative competence. After giving an extensive review of the literature, they write:

Our own tentative theory of communicative competence minimally includes three main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. (Canale and Swain 1980:28)

Canale (1983:6-11) later expanded the three major subsets into four: (a) grammatical competence, (b) sociolinguistic competence, (c) discourse competence, and (d) strategic competence. This classification will be followed in the present study.

According to Canale and Swain, grammatical competence includes 'knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology' (op. cit.:29). This type of competence is what structurally-focused classroom teaching is concerned with.

Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with sociocultural rules of use (i.e., appropriacy), 'which will specify the ways in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately' (op. cit.:30) in social interactions. For example, if the following interaction is in Chinese and between two Chinese, the second utterance is socio-linguistically appropriate:

A: Your daughter is very lovely.

B: No, she is very ugly.

However, if the interaction is in English and is between an English-speaking person (A) and a Chinese (B), then the response is socioculturally inappropriate because it goes against the norm/convention of the English-speaking community. Therefore, the second speaker would be said to lack the sociolinguistic competence to manipulate English.

Discourse competence involves the rules of discourse and the knowledge of how to organise sentences and utterances in discourse or text in a unified and acceptable way. This type of competence is not the same as grammatical competence in that the former operates at the discoursal level whereas the latter operates at the sentential level. For example, the following two sentences in (B) are grammatical, i.e., the person who composed them is grammatically competent. However, only (a) is appropriate in the context (see Widdowson 1978a:2):

A: What did the rain do?

B: (a) It destroyed the crops.

(b) The crops were destroyed by the rain.

There is nothing wrong with the grammaticality of the two sentences in (B), nor is there any semantic deviation. However, from a discourse point of view, (b) is not appropriate. Therefore, we can say that the person who uses (b) as a response has grammatical competence but lacks discourse competence.

Strategic competence consists of communication strategies, both verbal and non-verbal, which may be used 'to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence' (Canale and Swain op. cit.:30).

To conclude, the components of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain is very useful. *are* However, this does not mean that it is a well-established one. As Allen (1983:24) points out, although much effort has been spent on theoretical accounts of communicative competence, the ideas and proposals put forward so far are rather tentative and incomplete (cf. Yalden 1987a:23), and this 'reflects the unsettled nature of the field of communicative competence' (Scarcella, Andersen, and Krashen 1990:xv). It appears that there is no well-defined model of communicative competence -- the study of the relationship and interaction between the four components, nor is there a satisfactory description of how these four strands interact with one another. The lack of such a well-defined theory makes the development of CLT materials very difficult.

### 1.7 Levels of Communicative Competence

Allen (1983) suggests a three-level approach to language teaching and learning, in which the main components correspond to (a) a structural-analytic, (b) a functional-analytic, and (c) a non-analytic, or



experiential view of language (Allen 1983:25). These three components represent three levels of communicative competence:

Figure 1.1: Levels of communicative competence  
(from Allen 1983:36)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<u>Structural</u> Focus on language (formal features) a. Structural control b. Materials simplified structurally c. Mainly structural practice	<u>Functional</u> Focus on language (discourse features) a. Discourse control b. Materials simplified functionally c. Mainly discourse practice	<u>Experiential</u> Focus on the use of language a. Situational or topical control b. Authentic language use c. Uncontrolled, free practice

The sequence from Level 1 to Level 3 moves the focus from accuracy to fluency (cf. Brumfit 1984a:119). At Level 1 lies grammatical competence, at Level 2 discourse competence, and at Level 3 sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. It seems that Allen's description of the levels of communicative competence is a useful guideline for the development of CLT materials, and it appears that Yalden's (1983a, 1987a) 'proportional syllabus' was strongly influenced by Allen's proposal of the levels of communicative competence.

Allen's three-level analysis is also similar to Littlewood's (1981) distinction between pre-communicative and communicative activities, which include structural, quasi-communicative, functional, and social interaction activities, although Littlewood's analysis is confined to learning activities.

### 1.8 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with Chomsky's dichotomy of competence and performance, which was followed by an examination of Hymes' communicative competence. It was then argued that Chomsky's competence is concerned with internalised knowledge of systems of rules, excluding ability to use language and that Hymes' competence is different from that of Chomsky in that the Hymes' notion refers not only to knowledge but also to ability, although both concepts are idealised and absolute. Then it was pointed out that communicative competence has an informal meaning, which is widely used in applied linguistics. After that, the relationship between grammatical competence and communicative competence was discussed. Finally, the components and the levels of communicative competence were reviewed and discussed.

## CHAPTER 2: COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the close relationship between Hymes' 'communicative competence' and the communicative movement in language teaching. This chapter will be devoted to the discussion of CLT<sup>1</sup>: its importance in ELT, its types, its underlying theories, its characteristics, the concept of 'tasks' in CLT, communicative methodology, and problems with CLT. Since the present study is about communicative grammar teaching, the status of grammar in CLT will also be examined in this chapter.

### 2.2 CLT -- An Introduction

This brief introduction will discuss two issues: (a) the reasons for a communicative approach, and (b) the relationship between the communicative approach and the traditional approach.

#### 2.2.1 Why Communicative rather than Traditional ?

The communicative movement began in the early 1970s because of discontent with the existing state of affairs in language teaching. Before then the traditional approach dominated the language classroom, where there were few or no opportunities for students to use language for real communication. This type of language teaching defers effective communicative ability and skill until

the later stages of language learning; that is, it has 'low surrender value' (Johnson 1982:82). The objective of language teaching has little to do with what the learner hoped to do with language in real-life communication. The purpose of language teaching is 'mind-training' or 'transfer of training' and there is no consideration given to the learners' needs (Davies 1968:1). As a result, even the best students in the classroom are often unable to perform appropriately in social interactions. The unsatisfactory nature of the situation is summed up in Newmark's (1966/1979:161) observation that the student, who knows perfectly the structures of the language, is unable to use appropriate utterances to get his cigarette lit by a stranger when he has no matches. Thus, students who are structurally competent are not necessarily communicatively competent users of the language. Similarly, the discontent with situational language teaching can be seen from Howatt's observation:

By the end of the sixties it was clear that the situational approach as understood in, for example, the audio-visual method, had run its course. There was no future in continuing to pursue the chimera of predicting language on the basis of situational events. (Howatt 1984:280)

During the years when Bloomfieldian structuralism was flourishing, many linguists and language teachers regarded 'the analysis of linguistic structures as their central and perhaps their only concern' (Christophersen 1973:13) in language teaching. Both teachers and

material writers believed that if students were to become proficient in the language, they had to learn the language system (Johnson 1982:8). According to the structural view, the teaching of a language entails analysing language structures and constituents. The assumption was that once the students had learned the rules they would be able to apply them in real-world interactions. Therefore, the emphasis of language teaching was on usage and signification, not use and value (Widdowson 1978a). The fact is that although students who are structurally competent can produce grammatically correct sentences, they often fail to carry out communicative tasks appropriately. As Allen (1983:23) comments, many students can perform well in a controlled classroom but fail to transfer this ability to spontaneous, real-life communication. Thus, it was then argued that grammatical competence (i.e., knowing the rules of the language) does not mean communicative competence (i.e., being able to use the rules in real communication) nor will it in itself lead to successful communication. Therefore, it was realised that there was 'something else' (Johnson 1981a) that was missing in the learning/teaching process; 'this "something else" involves the ability to be appropriate, to know the right thing to say at the right time' (Johnson op. cit.:2) as well as abilities to organise utterances/sentences in discourse and to compensate for communication breakdowns.

There are, as Davies (1978/1982:147-8) notes, strong arguments for the teaching of communicative competence: On the one hand grammatical competence is not enough in itself because even if the structural rules have been learned it is not true that the learner can put them to use; it is communicative competence that is also needed; on the other hand,

since language is not communication ... and  
since it is communication that is needed,  
then it is communication rather than  
language that needs to be taught.

(Davies op. cit.:148)

To conclude, the communicative movement is timely and necessary and it has developed rapidly since the mid-1970s; the communicative approach to language teaching has been regarded as a departure from the traditional approach. The goal of language teaching and learning within CLT, unlike that of the traditional approach, is not grammatical competence, but communicative competence.

As the communicative movement developed, there have been different interpretations and variations of CLT. Basically, they belong to two types, which will be discussed in Section 2.3.

#### 2.2.2 The Communicative and the Traditional Approach -- a replacement or an improvement ?

When the communicative revolution began, it was believed that the communicative approach would replace the traditional approach to language teaching. For many,

the adoption of the communicative approach meant the rejection of other approaches. It was thought that the traditional approach and the new approach were exclusive rather than complementary. For example, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983:91-93), Quinn (1984:61-64), and Richards and Rodgers (1986:67-68), among others, offer checklists of comparison of features that distinguish the traditional from the communicative approach. However, as the communicative movement developed, it has become more and more clear that this new approach is not intended to replace, but to improve existing approaches. Recently, Howatt (1988) has observed that CLT came into being because of a desire to improve, not a desire for change, for

Most of the essential features of direct method and structural language teaching have remained in place in CLT, largely unexamined and undisturbed, just as they have been for a century or more.

(Howatt 1988:25)

Brumfit (1984a, 1984e, 1986b, 1988a), Howatt (1984, 1988), Mitchell (1988), Nunan (1988b), among others (cf. Johnson 1982:4, 5, Gower 1983:235, Widdowson 1990:11-12, 118, 132), have pointed out that many of the communicative principles and ideas are roughly the same as those of the traditional approach and that traditional activities and exercises 'continue to find a place under the communicative umbrella' (Mitchell 1988:109). Kaplan (1988:vii) argues that 'the roots of the communicative approach lie clearly and unambiguously in early



approaches to teaching and learning'. CLT is a set of ideas and assumptions about the nature of language, of language learning, and of language in use; it is an alternative approach to language teaching rather than a teaching method (in the sense of Richards and Rodgers 1986).

### 2.2.3 Summary and Conclusion

CLT is an improvement on traditional language teaching because its assumptions about the nature of language and language learning are different from those of the latter. The aim of CLT is communicative competence, including, but not only, grammatical competence. As Brumfit observes, 'there is ... a genuine communicative approach' (in the sense of Anthony 1963, Richards and Rodgers 1986), but there are no uniquely communicative techniques and strategies nor is there a single communicative method (Brumfit 1984e:1-2), nor has CLT gained the status of a method (in the sense of Richards and Rodgers 1986).

### 2.3 Two Types of CLT

As was pointed out in Section 0.2.1, there are many approaches to CLT. When everyone claims that their approaches are communicative, it is impossible to discuss any further without knowing which 'communicative approach' we are talking about. Therefore, in this section the types of CLT will be reviewed and the type of

CLT to be adopted in the present study will then be identified.

### 2.3.1 Interpretations of CLT

As early as 1979 Johnson identifies and characterises two types of CLT:

One is characterised by the rigorous specification of communicative needs typical of much ESP work, but often coupled with a methodology which is not significantly unlike traditional methodology. The other proposes methodological procedures that are quite often revolutionary, but equally often remain uncommitted on questions of syllabus design.

(Johnson 1979:194)

What Johnson identifies are two directions of CLT: syllabus-based and methodology-based (cf. Section 2.3.4 below).

In 1981, Stern, after a review of underlying assumptions, theoretical bases and practical procedures of CLT, suggested that two types of CLT be distinguished: (a) the linguistic approach, and (b) the psychological or pedagogic approach (Stern 1981:133-140). Later, this distinction was slightly modified as the teaching-about-communication approach and the teaching-through-communication approach (Stern 1990). The former approach is concerned with 'the analysis of communication through the study of speech acts, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics' and the latter refers to 'teaching through communication by involving the learner as a participant' (Stern op. cit.:96).

Howatt (1984) observes that there are two versions

of CLT: the 'weak' version and the 'strong' version. The weak version is concerned with teaching language useful for communication and practising it well; it 'stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes' (Howatt 1984:279). It 'has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years' (loc. cit.), a remark echoed by Johnson (1988a) when he identifies the 'standard' communicative methodology (see Section 2.7 below). The weak version of CLT, according to Howatt (1988:25), is similar to what Brumfit (1984a) calls accuracy and what Krashen (1981) calls learning. The 'strong' version of CLT, by contrast, 'advances the claim that language is acquired through communication'; therefore, it is concerned with 'stimulating the development of the language system' rather than 'activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language' (Howatt 1984:279). The strong version is described as 'using English to learn it' and the weak version, in comparison, as 'learning to use' English (Howatt loc. cit.). Since the idea of 'two-versions' was introduced, it has received much attention and aroused a great deal of interest (e.g., Richards and Rodgers 1986; Nunan 1988b; Mitchell 1988).

Although Widdowson does not make explicit distinctions between different versions of CLT, the distinction he makes between 'teaching for communication' and 'teaching as communication' (Widdowson 1983:30-31, 1984a: 215) in fact indicates that there are two types of CLT.

Generally speaking, Johnson's 'syllabus-based' type, Stern's 'the linguistic approach' (teaching about communication), Howatt's 'weak version', and Widdowson's 'teaching for communication' belong to one type, whereas the 'methodology-based' type, the 'psychological or pedagogic approach' (teaching through communication), the 'strong version', and the 'teaching as communication' belong to another type. In the following discussion, Howatt's 'weak' vs 'strong' CLT will be used as umbrella terms.

The main differences between the two versions of CLT can be summarised as follows: The theoretical bases of the weak version are mainly from linguistics and sociolinguistics while those of the strong version are from psycholinguistics and second language acquisition research. For the weak version, the language syllabus (a list of teaching content) is necessary while for the strong version this kind of syllabus is not necessary. In addition, the weak version stresses the importance of practice and learning for communication and is therefore product-oriented whereas the strong version puts the emphasis on using the language and learning through communication and is thus process-oriented (cf. White 1988:109-110; Melrose 1991:8-16).

Considering the Chinese ELT context, I would argue in favour of the weak version (teaching-for-communication) rather than of the strong version (teaching-as-communication). In the following discussion, I shall

concentrate on the weak version of CLT, although I understand that the teaching-for-communication and the teaching-as-communication approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary. I doubt the suitability and appropriacy of the strong version of CLT in the Chinese ELT context for four basic reasons. Firstly, English is a foreign, not second, language in China; therefore, there is no natural English language environment there. Secondly, Chinese learners' motivation is of the instrumental, not integrative type (Gardner and Lambert 1972). Thirdly, China is short of competent teachers of English who are able to conduct teaching-through-communication classes. Lastly, as my survey shows (see Chapter 6), Chinese teachers and students are not likely to be receptive to a strong version of CLT. Therefore, I would argue that it is the weak version rather than the strong version that is appropriate to the Chinese ELT context.

### 2.3.2 Theoretical Bases and Precursors of CLT

The theoretical bases of the weak version of CLT come from many disciplines; this enables applied linguists and educationalists to view language as:

- a. context-dependent;
- b. unstable within conventionally-determined limits;
- c. negotiable at all levels of analysis, but particularly in meanings of particular items;
- d. closely related to individuals' self-concept and identity.

(Brumfit 1988a:7)

Brumfit (1984b:314-5, 1988a) (cf. Candlin 1976:238-39, Brumfit and Johnson 1979:24-25, Johnson 1982:14-19, Melrose 1991:2-5, Savignon 1991:263-66) has summarised the theoretical sources of CLT and identified six disciplines which influence the discussion of CLT: (1) from linguistics -- the concept and principles of communicative competence (Hymes 1971, 1972; Canale and Swain 1980) and semantic potential (Halliday 1973, 1975, 1978); (2) from anthropology -- the relationship between language performance and social context and speech events (Hymes 1967); (3) from sociolinguistics -- findings which show that adjustment to particular settings is systematic (Labov 1972); (4) from social psychology -- the motivations, attitudes and feelings of learners (e.g., Day 1982; Giles 1977); (5) from philosophy -- speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1975a, 1975b) and the co-operative principle (Grice 1975); (6) from ethnomethodology -- an emphasis on the negotiation of conventions and a focus on the systematic nature of spontaneous activity (Coulthard 1977).

Firth (1957a, 1957b, 1959) can be regarded as the most important theoretical precursor of CLT, and probably Malinowski (1923) is the earliest precursor, for his conceptual framework -- 'the context of situation' -- was later developed by the Firthian school of linguistics. Firth's linguistic work (e.g., 1957a, 1957b, 1959), his rejection (e.g., 1957a:183) of de Saussure's (1916/1983) mechanistic approach to language, and his insistence that

'context of situation' be regarded as a level of language distinct from and equal to the levels of phonology and grammar 'left behind enough fertile ideas ... to germinate a radically different approach to the study of language varieties' (Howatt 1988:20). Halliday, who has devoted himself to the development of a functional approach to the description of language, has been so strongly influenced by Firth's (and Malinowski's) ideas that his own work (e.g., 1968, 1970a, 1973, 1975, 1978, 1985; also Kress 1976) has contributed greatly to the communicative movement in language teaching. For Halliday, language is a social activity and 'learning language is learning to mean' (Kress 1976:8). Austin's work (1962) is another very important contribution; the book How to Do Things with Words (1962) is regarded by Howatt (op. cit.:19) as 'the bible of the communicative movement'. The work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975a, 1975b, 1979) shows that we are performing speech acts when using language in communication and that it is possible for a given speech act to have different linguistic forms while it is also possible for different speech acts to be realised in the same linguistic form. Searle's (1969) contribution to the communicative movement is considerable because it was he who revived interest in Austin's work. As was pointed out in the previous chapter (e.g., Section 1.3.1), Hymes' work demonstrates that an adequate theory of language must also take into account social factors. His concept of



communicative competence reflects the social view of language. On the other hand, Fillmore (1968), whose case grammar stresses the semantic relationships between noun phrases and predicates, has influenced the design and development of notional/functional syllabuses (e.g., Wilkins' (1976) semantico-grammatical categories, argues Furey (1984:11), indirectly owe much to Fillmore's case grammar.). The works of these scholars, among others, provide the communication dimension to the study of language and the teaching and learning of language, and they have made major contributions to the underpinnings and developments of the communicative movement.

It is of interest to note that the communicative movement began at the time when within linguistics, work in semantics and sociolinguistics proposed that linguists should broaden their scopes of inquiry beyond a Chomskyan preoccupation with explaining grammatical competence. For example, the writings of Austin (1962), Hymes (1967), Fillmore (1968), McCawley (1968, 1973), Searle (1969), Ross (1970, 1975), and Lakoff (1971, 1975) were all contributions to a new interest in meaning and language use.

To conclude, it is seen from the discussion that CLT, unlike approaches/methods such as situational language teaching, whose theoretical basis is mainly a type of British 'structuralism' (Richards and Rodgers 1986:35) or the audiolingual method, which was derived from American structuralism (Richards and Rodgers op.

cit.:48), does not rest upon any single theory of language but draws on a variety of disciplines.

### 2.3.3 Examples of the Weak Version of CLT

Within each type of CLT, there are several manifestations and examples. The following four variations are well-known examples of the weak version of CLT.

(1) The notional/functional syllabus. This variety refers to the project of the Council of Europe (the Threshold Level) started in the early 1970s (Shaw 1977/1982, Johnson 1982, Howatt 1984, 1988). The focus of this variation is on the language syllabus. Wilkins (1976) and van Ek and Alexander (1980) are two of the most well-known works of the project.

(2) Using procedures where learners work in pairs or groups employing available language resources in problem-solving tasks. This variety stresses the importance of methodology. Widdowson (1979, 1983, 1984a, 1984b, 1987a, 1990) can be regarded as the representative of this variation, for he believes that a crucial element of CLT is the adoption of a methodology which will encourage learners to do things with the language they are learning (Widdowson 1979:167, 1990:160).

(3) The provision for functional syllabus specifications realised through a purely functional methodology. According to Yalden (1983b:397), within this variety a 'communicative syllabus' is designed to map out for the teacher what is to be done in the

classroom. Role plays, simulations, information-gap and problem-solving activities, which are geared to a forecast of the needs of learners, are extensively used in the teaching/learning process.

(4) An integration of grammatical and functional teaching. This variety is represented by Littlewood (1981), who writes that one of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to both functional and structural aspects of language and combines these two into a more fully communicative view (Littlewood 1981:1).

The type of CLT I shall follow is similar to the fourth type, because the first and the second type are partial in that only the syllabus or the methodology receives enough attention (The problems with these two variations will be further discussed in Section 2.3.4 below). I would not agree with the third type because it is purely functional rather than communicative.

#### 2.3.4 Two Mainstreams in CLT

From the discussion in the above section it can be seen that within the weak version of CLT, two mainstreams (cf. Section 2.3.1 above) can be discerned: One is the syllabus-oriented approach represented by Wilkins (1976), and the other is the methodology-oriented approach represented by Widdowson (1979, 1984a, 1984b, 1990), with an eclectic view adopted by Johnson (1981a, 1982) in between<sup>2</sup>. The syllabus-oriented mainstream was very



fashionable between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, whereas the methodology-oriented one has become dominant since the mid-1980s.

Wilkins stresses the importance of the notional syllabus by saying that it

takes the communicative facts of language into account from the beginning without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors. (Wilkins 1976:19)

For Wilkins, the notional syllabus has advantages that the structural and the situational syllabuses lack, because the other two types of syllabus are inadequate in teaching language for communication. Wilkins, however, over-emphasises the superiority of the notional syllabus when he says that the notional syllabus is

potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence... (Wilkins loc. cit.)

As Widdowson (1978b/1979:249, also see 1984b:26, 1990:39) points out, what Wilkins (1976) provides in the syllabus is only 'a very partial and imprecise description of certain semantic and pragmatic rules', not a well-defined description (cf. Morrow 1978:19, Mitchell 1981:103-4). Therefore, it is hard to see how such a syllabus can, of itself, produce a communicative competence. On the other hand, since the syllabus and classroom learning are not directly linked and since the syllabus is mainly for materials writers and teachers, not for learners, the syllabus itself can never produce a communicative competence. As Wilkins himself defines, 'syllabuses are

specifications of the content of language teaching' (1981:83), or to follow Widdowson (1990:129), a syllabus is 'a set of bearings for teacher action'. It is clear that the influence of a syllabus on the learner and his achievement in the learning process is only indirect, mediated by its implementation in materials writing and classroom instruction. We can, therefore, argue that no matter how a syllabus is conceived and designed, it can never, of itself, produce a communicative competence. To over-emphasise the importance of a language syllabus will lead to neglect of methodology and learner factors, among other things.

Widdowson, by contrast, downgrades the role of syllabus by over-emphasising the importance of methodology. He writes that in the stages of writing teaching materials and applying teaching procedures/strategies in the classroom 'it may turn out not to make much difference' whether you have a structural or notional/functional syllabus (Widdowson 1978b/1979:249). Here Widdowson seems to overlook the critical point in syllabus design and materials writing that form-meaning relations are not in a one-to-one correspondence (see Section 3.4). It can be argued that indeed there is some difference between a structural and notional/functional syllabus because the syllabus, as an essential element in a teaching/learning programme, clearly affects and influences, either directly or indirectly, the writing of instructional materials, teaching methodology, and

classroom techniques and activities, although a notional/functional syllabus does not 'ensure the adoption of a communicative methodology' (Howatt 1984:283). The specification and organisation of teaching content by categories of meaning (notion) and function is a reflection of a communicative view of language. Therefore, in a communication-oriented teaching programme a notional/functional syllabus has more implications for a communicative methodology than a structural one. To say that in a communicative teaching programme it makes no difference whether one adopts a notional/functional syllabus or a structural one is to deny not only the relationship between syllabus and methodology but also the communicative view underlying the notional/functional syllabus. This issue will be taken up later (see Section 3.5).

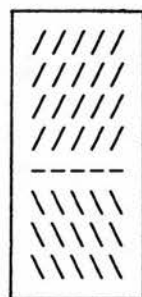
Unlike either Wilkins or Widdowson, Johnson argues that whether a course is communicative or not depends 'as much on its methodology as on the pedigree of its syllabus' (Johnson 1982:106). According to him, the degree of success of a course lies not only in the sophistication of the methodology but also in the nature of the syllabus (op. cit.:189); to judge whether a course is communicative or otherwise, one should pay attention not only to how the syllabus is organised but also to what its methodology is like (Johnson 1981a:11).

The discussion so far has shown that Wilkins and Widdowson represent two different directions, or two

extremes, with Johnson taking an eclectic view, in the weak version of CLT. I think that it is hard to follow either Wilkins or Widdowson because of the extreme views they take. I agree with Johnson (1981a, 1982) because I believe that both syllabus and methodology have their own role to play although the adoption of one does not entail the other. For me, both syllabus and methodology are important in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of a teaching programme. If syllabus and methodology are seen as 'blocks' in the curriculum, then their relative size in different views can be represented as below:

Figure 2.1: Size of syllabus and methodology

Methodology:



Syllabus:

(Wilkins)

(Johnson)

(Widdowson)

Key:



= methodology,



= syllabus

### 2.3.5 Concluding Remarks

For the past sixteen years or so the scope of CLT has expanded, although 'the original motivation for adopting a communicative approach ... was remedial, an



attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing structural syllabuses, materials, and methods' (Howatt 1984:287). The comprehensiveness of this approach makes it difficult to describe it succinctly. There is no single text or authority on this approach, nor are there precisely established teaching procedures, strategies and techniques to be associated with it which constitute a 'method' in the conventional sense (Johnson 1982:4, Roberts 1982:99, Brumfit 1984e, Richards and Rodgers 1986). Very often CLT is understood differently, and 'there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit' (Richards and Rodgers 1986:83).

## 2.4 Theories of Language and Learning in CLT

Any teaching approach or method makes use of explicit or implicit ideas and assumptions about the nature of language and learning; it is also a reflection of the belief about the nature of language and learning. Therefore, in this section the theory of language and the theory of learning in CLT will be examined.

### 2.4.1 Theory of Language

The issue of the theory of language is related to the question 'What is language?' on the one hand and the description of language on the other hand. Broadly speaking, there are two answers to the question 'What is language?': (a) a linguistic answer, and (b) a human

Is it your view or  
your summary I Bell?

science answer (Bell 1981). From a linguistic perspective, language is a code, a system of forms (e.g., sounds, letters, words, sentences) which consists of sub-systems. Language, when looked at from the point of view of a human scientist (e.g., an anthropologist, sociologist, social psychologist, psychologist, etc.), is a system for the expression of meaning. Therefore, the question to be asked has become 'What is language for?' or 'What do people do with language?' rather than 'What is language?' (Bell op. cit.:22). The main difference between these two views is that the former looks at language from a formal perspective whereas the latter from a functional perspective. As for language descriptions, there have been various schools of thought in linguistics: traditional grammar, structural linguistics, transformational generative grammar, systemic (functional) grammar, language variation and register analysis, discourse analysis (cf. Sampson 1980, Hutchinson and Waters 1987:24-38). Therefore, as Richards and Rodgers (1986:16-7) observe, there are at least three different theoretical views of language: (1) the structural view; (2) the functional view; (3) the interactional view. Richards and Rodgers define the functional view as 'language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning' and the interactional view as seeing 'language as a vehicle for the realisation of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals'. The

communicative approach to language teaching to a large extent reflects the second and third views of language; the belief underlying the approach is that language is a tool for communication.<sup>3</sup> These views emphasise the importance of the semantic and communicative dimension of language rather than merely the structural characteristics of language.

However, it should be noted that the functional or the interactional view of language is not new at all; it was recognised long before the communicative movement in language teaching. As early as 1924, Jespersen wrote:

The essence of language is human activity -- activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood by another, and activity on the part of that other to understand what was in the mind of the first.  
(Jespersen 1924:17)

As was pointed out in Section 2.3.2 above, CLT, at the level of language theory, 'has a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base' (Richards and Rodgers 1986:71; also see Brumfit 1984e, 1988a). Halliday's functional view of language has greatly contributed to the theory of language underlying CLT, because for him 'the internal organisation of language is not arbitrary but embodies a positive reflection of the functions that language has evolved to serve in the life of social man' (Halliday 1970b:25, cited in Johnson 1982:17). The communicative view of language, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986:71), has the following four characteristics: (a) Language is a system for the expression of

functional meaning; (b) The primary function of language is for communication; (c) The structure of language reflects its functional uses in communication; (d) The primary units of language are not merely its structural items in the sentence, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse. Following Richards and Rodgers, I would assume that a communicative view of language, at least, makes the following four assumptions:

- (1) Language is not merely a system of forms, but a system for expressing meanings;
- (2) Language is a vehicle for the expression of meaning and its main function is communication and interaction.
- (3) Language is made up of categories of functional and communicative meaning rather than grammatical isolates.
- (4) Language operates at a discoursal level, not a purely sentential level.

#### 2.4.2 Theory of Learning

Having looked at the theory of language in CLT, I now turn to the theory of learning. This section will discuss three issues: (a) two different views of learning, (b) two models of language learning, and (c) the theory of learning in CLT.

#### 2.4.2.1 Two theories of learning

The issue of learning theory under consideration here is concerned with the question 'How do people learn languages?', although the theory of learning does not confine itself to learning languages. Until the beginning of the present century, there was no coherent and systematic theory of learning in the language teaching sphere (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:39; cf. Brown 1980:67). Broadly speaking, there are two main theories of learning: (a) behaviourism, and (b) cognitive code (see Bell 1981:23-24, Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:9; cf. Brown 1980:67-78, Stern 1983:169, Hutchinson and Waters 1987:39-48). The behaviourist theory of learning came from the psychology of the Behaviourist school -- mainly Pavlov and Skinner. The basic belief of the theory as applied to language learning is that learning a language is a mechanical process of habit formation in a stimulus-response sequence. This theory of learning, accepted by structuralists, was seriously challenged by Chomsky (1959), who argued that the human mind could transfer what was learned in one situation to other novel situations. Then came Mentalism (i.e., thinking is a rule-governed activity), which was developed into the cognitive theory of learning (i.e., learners are thinking beings). Although this theory stresses the importance of learners as human beings, it does not deal with their attitudes, feelings, and motivations. Therefore, there came into being another theory of learning -- one

incorporating the affective factor (i.e., learners are emotional beings) -- which holds that learning is an emotional experience and that the feelings evoked in the learning process have a crucial bearing on the result of learning (see Stevick 1976, 1980; cf. Rogers 1951). The mentalist view and the affective factor, though different from the cognitive code, can be regarded as variations of the cognitive code, which is fundamentally different from the behaviourist view.

#### 2.4.2.2 Two models of language learning

Littlewood (1984) summarises two models of second and foreign language learning: (a) the model of creative construction, and (b) the model of skill learning. The first model 'emphasises the cognitive processing strategies that the learners bring to the task, in order to develop internal representations of the second [and foreign] language' (Littlewood 1984:73). This model assumes that learning is subconscious and that learners construct internal representations of the target language system in the learning process. It stresses the importance of natural exposure; according to this model, 'a person can learn a language without ever having to use it productively' (Littlewood loc. cit.). By contrast, the skill-learning model assumes that if learners practise using the language consciously, they will eventually internalise the underlying language system. In other words, if learners are required to produce

predetermined pieces of language (e.g., classroom language practice), the productive activity 'will lead them to internalise the system underlying the language' (Littlewood loc. cit.). This model stresses the importance of teaching and conscious learning. The differences between these two models can be diagrammatically presented as follows:

Figure 2.2: A comparison of two models of learning

Creative construction model:

Input from exposure → Internal processing → System constructed by learners → Spontaneous utterances

Skill-learning model:

Input from instruction → Productive activity → System assimilated by learners → Spontaneous utterances

(Littlewood 1984:73)

Like the distinction between the strong version of CLT and the weak one, the distinction between these two learning models is not hard and fast. Therefore, it may be better to view the creative construction model and the skill-learning model as two extremes on a subconscious-learning and conscious-learning continuum, as presented in the following:

Figure 2.3 Two models of learning on a continuum

Subconscious learning	-----	Conscious learning
Creative construction model	.....	Skill-learning model

#### 2.4.2.3 The theory of learning in CLT

As to the theory of learning in the communicative



approach, little has been written about it (Richards and Rodgers 1986:72), compared with the work that has been done on 'communicative syllabuses' and communicative teaching methodology. Since language and learning are inseparable (Davies 1968:1), it is essential to consider the theory of learning no matter what approach we adopt. Savignon's (1983) and Krashen's (1981, 1982) studies on language acquisition and learning have made some indirect contributions to the theory of learning in CLT. Savignon regards second language acquisition research as a source for learning theories and examines the role of linguistic, social, cognitive, and individual variables in language acquisition (Richards and Rodgers 1986:71). Krashen, on the other hand, takes acquisition as the basic process in developing learners' language proficiency and makes the distinction between acquisition (unconscious process) and learning (conscious process); this distinction lies at the heart of Krashen's theory, which proposes that the acquisition of language comes about through using language in communication rather than through practising language skills, a view that has been adopted in the strong version of CLT. Although findings from second language acquisition research have influenced the development of the weak version of CLT, the learning theory of the weak version is not directly related to these studies (Johnson 1988a).

Richards and Rodgers suggest that there are three principles of an underlying learning theory discerned in

### CLT practices:

- (1) the communication principle: Activities that involve real communication promote learning;
- (2) the task principle: Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning;
- (3) the meaningful principle: Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

(Richards and Rodgers 1986:72)

These three learning principles reveal the nature of language learning in the communicative approach, which can be applied to syllabus design and classroom methodology. As Richards and Rodgers do not make a distinction between the weak and strong versions of CLT (Howatt 1984), it is not clear whether these three principles underlie the weak version or not. Besides, it seems that the three principles are basically the same, because if activities involve real communication, they are usually meaningful and task-based. Besides, the principles pertain to methodological matters rather than to the theory of learning.

At the risk of over-simplifying, I would say that the creative construction model of learning underlies the strong version of CLT whereas the skill-learning model underlies the weak version, although the theory of learning underlying both versions is the cognitive code.

Johnson (e.g., 1986, 1988b) has considered a skill-learning model of learning and argued that 'looking at language learning in terms of skill may be fruitful in both theoretical and practical terms' (Johnson 1988b:89).

The skill-learning model of learning (also see Littlewood 1984; cf. Levelt 1978) assumes that the acquisition of communicative competence in a second/foreign language is an example of skill development in the learning process (Richards and Rodgers 1986:72). This model of learning puts the emphasis on practice as a means of developing communicative skills.

It is of interest to point out that Howatt regards behaviourism as the theory of learning in the weak version of CLT:

If there is a theory of learning here, it is our old friend behaviourism, more relaxed than before, but still committed to the view that learning a language is essentially a matter of learning and perfecting a set of (four or more) skills.  
(Howatt 1988:25)

This is an acute observation. Howatt discerns the behavioural aspect of the learning theory underlying the weak version, because it does stress the importance of practising using language, and learning and perfecting communication skills. In fact, as Widdowson (1990:11) points out, 'there must be some aspects of language learning which have to do with habit formation'. However, it can be argued that the basic assumption of language teaching and learning in CLT is not habit formation or stimulus-response, but is rather a skill-learning model, which has a cognitive aspect as well as a behavioural aspect:

The cognitive aspect involves the internalisation of plans for creating appropriate behaviour. ... The behavioural

aspect involves the automation of these plans so that they can be converted into fluent performance in real time.

(Littlewood 1984:74)

## 2.5 Characteristics of CLT and Communicative Features

Every language teaching approach/method has a set of characteristics, and CLT is no exception. It is possible to identify a set of characteristics of CLT (Johnson 1988a:58), although it is difficult to list the full set because some of the characteristics are shared by other approaches/methods, as was pointed out earlier. In this section, only the obvious and important characteristics will be discussed.

### 2.5.1 Characteristics of CLT

Wilkins (1976, 1978), Johnson (1978, 1979, 1981a, 1982, 1988a), Morrow (1978, 1981), Widdowson (1978a, 1979, 1984a, 1990), Revell (1979), Littlewood (1981), Allen and Spada (1983), Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), Brumfit (1984a, 1986b, 1988a), Howatt (1984, 1988), Maley (1984a, 1986), Larsen-Freeman (1986), Richards and Rodgers (1986), among others (see also Johnson and Morrow 1978, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Johnson and Morrow 1981, Johnson and Porter 1983), discuss, implicitly or explicitly, the characteristics of CLT, some of which are as follows:

(1) an emphasis on target needs (i.e., what the learner needs to do in the target situation) as well as learning needs (i.e., what the learner needs to do in

order to learn) (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:54) and attempts to define them (Munby 1978);

(2) a focus on communicative use of language as well as social appropriacy rather than simply on correct language form;

(3) an emphasis on the relationship between meaning and form and use;

(4) a tendency to favour meaningful, meaning-focused, fluency-focused rather than simply mechanical, form-focused, accuracy-focused activities;

(5) an emphasis on using language to perform communication tasks rather than simply exercises on overt language learning;

(6) an attention to student initiative and interaction and a focus on the learning-centred approach;

(7) a sensitivity to learners' differences in personality and learning style rather than a 'lockstep' approach (in which all students proceed through the same materials at the same pace) (Maley 1984a:43);

(8) an awareness of variation in language use and encouragement and tolerance of 'sub-standard' language variation rather than simply attention to the language (i.e., recognition that there are many Englishes, not one standard English) (Maley loc. cit.; also see Trudgill and Hannah 1982);

(9) the change in teachers' attitude to learners' errors (i.e., teachers are more tolerant of learners' errors);

(10) the tolerance of learners' errors to promote fluency in learners' production and their confidence in the learning process;

(11) the change in the roles of both the teacher and learners in the classroom (e.g., teachers become less dominant while students play a more active role in the classroom activity);

(12) the presentation of language items in contexts and at the discoursal level rather than simply in isolation and at the sentential level;

(13) the authenticity of teaching materials, and of classroom activities (Widdowson 1979), authenticity to the state of the learner, and authenticity to the classroom itself (Breen 1983, 1985);

(14) the use of techniques and classroom activities and groupings which encourage student participation in natural learning activities -- group-work, pairwork, simulations, information-gap and problem-solving activities;

(15) a tendency to design semantic (e.g., notional/functional) syllabuses to replace structural syllabuses.

Clearly, the above list is far from exhaustive. Some of these characteristics are either directly or indirectly derived from the belief about the nature of language (i.e., the theory of language, see Section 2.4.1 above), others from the assumptions about the nature of language learning (i.e., theory of learning, see Section 2.4.2 above); still others are from principles of



communicative methodology (see Section 2.7.2 below) and in turn from the theory of learning. Some of the characteristics are concerned with classroom activities, others with materials writing and syllabus design (see Section 2.7.2). Maley (1984a:44, 1986:90) believes that if the communicative principles, procedures, and techniques are well-implemented, there are many advantages in adopting CLT. He summarises some of the advantages of CLT, and these are incorporated in the following list:

(1) Compared with the traditional approach, it is more likely to help learners to acquire communicative competence;

(2) It is immediately relevant to what learners will need to do with the language once they have learned it because the purpose of teaching and learning adopted is to enable them to learn to use the language needed in real-world communication;

(3) Because of its nature, it is, generally speaking, more interesting and useful, and students are likely to be highly motivated so that they will put more effort into the learning;

(4) It is less wasteful of time and effort than approaches which attempt to teach the whole language system, since it teaches only what is relevant to target needs and learning needs and necessary for communication;

(5) In the long term it equips learners with communicative skills for social interactions, since it is



based on a close approximation to language in use;

(6) It is likely to treat learners as 'whole persons' (i.e., their moods, feelings, attitudes, motivations, etc. are taken into account in the teaching and learning processes), because learner factors are taken into careful consideration.

### 2.5.2 Communicative Features

Since the characteristics of CLT and some of the advantages of adopting it have been discussed, this section will examine 'communicative features', which are derived from the characteristics discussed above which in turn are derived from the theory of language and the theory of learning and the principles of CLT (see Sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2, and 2.7.2, and also Johnson 1982:147-213, 1988a, Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:90-4, Quinn 1984:61-4, Larsen-Freeman 1986:123-38, Richards and Rodgers 1986:64-83). Some of the communicative features are relevant to the development of teaching materials, others to the practices of classroom activity and methodology. The features discussed below are listed alphabetically and can be categorised as follows: Feature 8 (goal-directed) is about the nature of communication: in actual communication, every communicative act has a goal/purpose. Feature 12 (learning-centred) is concerned with education in general. Features 1 to 7, 9 to 11, and 13 to 17 can refer to the design of learning tasks/activities and the nature of doing tasks/activities.

That is, they are applicable to materials writing and classroom teaching. Feature 11 (intervention-free) is mainly concerned with classroom methodology. I shall relate these communicative features with the principles of communicative methodology later (Section 2.7.2).

1. appropriate: Appropriacy refers to the suitability of the use of language in a particular sociocultural context. For example, if a speaker of English says to a Chinese tourist guide who has helped him/her a lot: 'I really don't know how to thank you enough for what you've done for me.' and the guide answers by saying 'No, no. It's my duty.' (a conventional Chinese response), then the answer is not appropriate, although it is appropriate if the interaction is in Chinese.

2. authentic: Authenticity may pertain to the characteristics of the language materials: Authentic materials are anything written or spoken which was not originally intended for language teaching purposes. Authenticity may also refer to the way of doing a task/activity (Widdowson 1978a, 1979, 1990), to the state of the learner, and to the classroom itself (Breen 1983, 1985). For example, if the task is about two Chinese peasants discussing things in English, no matter how well they speak, the performing of the task is not authentic.

3. challenging: 'Challenging' may pertain to the 'doing' of a task/activity. If a task is challenging, it is not easy to do. However, if a task is too difficult,

it will be frustrating, whereas if it is too easy, it will be boring and/or de-motivating. A challenging task requires reasoning and strategic abilities.

4. choice-free: The opposite is choice-limited. 'Choice-free' is concerned with the use/choice of forms and meanings. If a task/exercise is choice-limited, the performer has few options to choose; if it is choice-free, he can do almost whatever he likes. For example, an exercise with the instruction 'Complete the following sentences with A or AN' is choice-limited. A task with the instruction 'Tell your partner something about yourself' is choice-free.

5. contextualised: The opposite is de-contextualised. Contextualisation can be seen linguistically, socially and culturally. If a certain language item is contextualised linguistically, its meaning is not ambiguous because it functions in discourse. If a task is contextualised socioculturally, the nature of the task is appropriate for a particular society and culture.

6. creative: Creativity refers to the learner's performance in production. Exercises/tasks can be designed to promote or limit creativity. If a task is heterogeneously-oriented<sup>4</sup>, it promotes creativity. For example, if students are asked to perform a task like this: 'Look at the picture drawn by an eccentric artist and tell your partner what the theme is.', then the activity is creative. By contrast, if students are asked to write sentences after models, then the activity is not

creative.

7. fluency-based: The opposite is accuracy-based. Fluency concerns the level of language proficiency in communication, which includes the ability to produce language with ease, within 'real time', and without a breakdown in communication and to exchange ideas efficiently and effectively. Accuracy, by comparison, refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak and write fluently and efficiently. Teachers' tolerance of learners' errors will promote fluency and confidence.

8. goal-directed: Goal-directedness refers to the purpose of communication. Addressers perform communicative acts because they want something to happen as a result of what they say. Addressees listen to or read discourse because they want to find out what ideas and information are being conveyed. If a task is goal-directed, it has communicative purpose(s) and value and the participants have a desire to communicate -- they use language to convey or demand information.

9. integrative: The opposite is discrete. 'Integrative' may be concerned with the use of different language skills and/or the use of different language forms. If a task is integrative, it practises a number of skills and/or different language items at the same time. A pair of related terms is 'indirect/covert' as opposed to 'direct/overt'. Meaningful activities are often integrative. For example, if each of the students

is given a chance to ask a politician five questions (no matter what kind of questions he would like to ask), then the activity practises not only Wh-questions, but also other types of questions. Then the activity is integrative.

10. interesting: 'Interesting' may refer to a task/activity itself or to the language and/or ideas it contains. If a task (or its achievement) is interesting, it is often meaningful and it usually promotes learning. If the language (text) and/or ideas in the task is (are) interesting, it also promotes learning, although it may not mean that doing the task is meaningful.

11. intervention-free: Intervention means the teacher's 'interference' during students' interaction or (oral) production. For example, if a teacher corrects a student's grammatical mistakes/errors when the student is using language to solve a problem, then the activity is not intervention-free. Intervention-free activities are intrinsically meaning-focused, because the attention is directed to meaning rather than form. Intervention-free techniques will encourage learners' fluency and confidence.

12. learning-centred: The opposite is teaching-centred. Learning-centredness means that the emphasis in pedagogy is on the 'learning' rather than on the 'teaching'. For example, one way for students to learn the differences between 'be going to' and 'will' (when used to express 'future meaning') is for the teacher to

give a lecture on the differences and for the students to listen and take notes. This is a teaching-centred strategy. An alternative way is for the students to be provided with authentic texts in which 'be going to' and 'will' are used to express the future meaning. By reading the texts and doing the tasks related to them, students realise the differences between the two forms for themselves. This is a learning-centred strategy. Learning-centredness is a very important principle in CLT; it will be further discussed in Section 7.5, where it will be compared with 'learner-centred' (see also Brumfit 1985, Prabhu 1985, Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

13. meaning-focused: The opposite is form-focused. 'Meaning-focused' refers to the 'interest' (e.g., attention) being in content, not in form. If a task is meaning-focused, the interest lies in meaning/content rather than form/structure. For example, 'What do people say when they want to make requests?' is a meaning-focused question/task. By contrast, 'Can you make sentences with the phrase WOULD YOU MIND?' is a form-focused question/task.

14. meaningful: Meaningfulness refers to the nature of the task/activity and the way of doing it. If a task is meaningful, it may stimulate students to make good use of their personal knowledge and to seek the information they lack; it also encourages them to pay more attention to meaning in context rather than to form in isolation. For example, when the teacher is holding a book in front

of the class and asks the class to answer the question 'What am I holding?', the question-answer is not meaningful.<sup>5</sup>

15. motivating: 'Motivating' usually refers to the doing of a task/activity. If a task is motivating, it arouses learners' interest and curiosity. If a task is not challenging, it is often de-motivating. Activities reflecting the situations in which learners will be engaged later ~~are~~ intrinsically motivating. Challenging, interesting, and motivating are closely related terms.

16. personalised: 'Personalised' refers to the involvement of the person who carries out a task/activity and the doing of it. If a task is personalised, its completion requires the use of personal ideas, opinions, preferences, experiences, etc. For example, an activity whose requirement is 'Tell your partner what you think of the following activities: fishing, disco dancing, etc.' is personalised. If a student is given a passage and is required to ask and answer questions based on the text (e.g., TEXT: John Brown gets up at 7 every morning. He usually leaves home for work at 7.30. ... QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Who gets up at 7 every morning? --> John Brown gets up at 7 every morning. When does John Brown get up every morning? --> John Brown gets up at 7 every morning. ...), then the exercise is not personalised. Generally speaking, personalised tasks/exercises are intrinsically more meaningful, interesting and motivating than manipulative ones.



17. task-based: 'Task-based' is applicable to the design of teaching materials, or the classroom activity. It assumes that students can learn the language by doing tasks related to language. Learning activities can be task-based or exercise-based. An example of a task-based activity is, if a student is given a letter with the instruction which reads 'Imagine that you are the addressee of the letter. Read the letter and then write a reply'. That is, the student is required to carry out a task -- to write a reply. On the other hand, if the student is given a letter and is required to change active sentences into passive, then the activity is exercise-based, not communicatively task-based. This feature is very important in CLT; it will be further discussed in Section 7.5.2 (also see Section 2.6.1).

To summarise, these 17 features listed alphabetically above can be grouped under the following three areas: (a) general principles, (b) design (teaching content), and (c) procedure (teaching process).

#### (1) General principles

General principles are often abstract, and are concerned with all those involved in the course (e.g., the course designer, materials writer, and the classroom teacher). The difference between a principle and a feature is that the former is general and often abstract whereas the latter is specific. There are only three features that will be regarded as principles (see Section

7.5): 8. goal-directed, 12. learning-centred, and 17. task-based.

## (2) Design

Design is concerned with the content of a course and the writing of instructional materials (e.g., syllabus, designing of tasks and activities), and it is more relevant to the course designer and materials writer than to the classroom teacher. All 17 features are related to the design.

## (3) Procedure

Procedure concerns the teaching process (e.g., the moment-to-moment classroom teaching, teacher's techniques and strategies, and classroom practice). It is more relevant to the classroom teacher and learners than to the course designer and materials writer. All the features are related to the teaching process.

## (4) Features at different stages of the course

Strictly speaking, the design stage and the procedure stage cannot be separated without good reasons because one influences or determines the other. However, this does not mean that the meaning and realisation of features cannot be discerned at different stages. For example, in the design stage, 'authentic' is relevant to the selection of input (i.e., whether the input has been adapted for teaching purposes); it is also relevant to

the design of task requirements. In the procedure stage (teaching process), 'authentic' is used to refer to the quality of doing the activity (i.e., in Widdowson's (1978a, 1979) sense). Similarly, 'interesting' can be used to refer to the language/content of the instructional materials; it can also refer to the doing of a task/activity, in which case it is relevant to the teaching process. Even features such as 'intervention-free', which has more to do with the teaching process (especially the teacher's classroom techniques and strategies), is also relevant to the design stage. When a certain task is being designed, its underlying teaching methodology is reflected in one way or another. For example, to make an activity intervention-free, the materials writer can state clearly in the Teacher's Handbook that because the task is designed to find out what types of mistakes/errors students at this stage make the teacher must not interrupt students' production.

### 2.5.3 Notes on Some Features

It is often very difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the features, as some of them are closely related. For example, 'challenging', 'interesting', and 'motivating' are closely linked. A task/activity may have these three features; it may have only one or two of them. For example, a competition-task involving group-work about working out solutions to certain problems may be challenging, interesting and motivating. Equally, it

can be challenging but not interesting or motivating, or vice versa; it can also be interesting but not motivating or challenging.

Another pair of features that are related are 'meaning-focused' and 'meaningful'. 'Meaning-focused' is in contrast with 'form-focused'; that is, in doing a task/activity, the attention can be paid to either 'meaning' or 'form'. 'Meaningful' refers to the nature of doing something; that is, the point is whether there is any meaning/value/importance in doing something. Meaningful tasks/activities often encourage learners to pay attention to meaning rather than to form; therefore, they can be both meaningful and meaning-focused. 'Meaningful' is also related to 'interesting' and 'motivating', although they are different. For example, doing a task about discovering people's sleeping habits (interview) (e.g., Maley and Moulding 1981:3) may be meaningful (because it (a) involves processing and transferring information, (b) has an information-gap, and (c) requires risk-taking skills) (Johnson 1982, 1988a), interesting (because the interviewer can compare different people's -- including his own -- sleeping habits), and motivating (if the interviewer is interested in discovering others' sleeping habits). However, to others, it may be meaningful but not interesting or motivating.

Still another pair of features is 'choice-free' and 'creative'. These two are very similar. However,

'choice-free' emphasises the context in which choices are made. If the choice is limited, then it is not choice-free. Conversely, 'creative' is concerned with the freedom of production. That is, it refers to how much freedom one can have in writing or speaking. Both 'choice-free' and 'creative' are also related to 'personalised'. However, 'personalised' is mainly concerned with the emotional/psychological involvement of the person who does a task/activity. That is, it refers to whether the completion of the task/activity requires personal ideas, opinions, preferences, experiences, etc.

Strictly speaking, it is often subjective to determine the communicative features of a task/exercise because different people perceive a task/exercise (and its features and achievement) differently. In other words, communicative features are concerned not only with the task/exercise itself and its completion but also with people's responses to them (i.e., the task/exercise and its completion) (see Section 6.4.4.3). On the other hand, some features have more implications than others. For example, task-basedness and learning-centredness are features concerned with a new approach to education in general. If a task is task-based and/or learning-centred, it is often interesting and/or meaningful, but not the other way round. Similarly, if an exercise/activity is task-based, it is usually goal-directed and/or motivating. However, to decide which feature is 'larger' than others is as complicated as to treat all

features as equal. The main reason for identifying the communicative features as such is as follows: In the survey of GIFL teachers' and students' attitudes to ELT in general and grammar teaching in particular there are some exercises to be evaluated; in order to examine the relationship between the 'communicativeness' of the exercises and the respondents' preferences for them, the 'communicativeness' has to be defined -- the communicative features defined here were used as criteria: the more features an exercise has, the more communicative it is (see Chapter 6). Another reason is that if only a few broad features are identified, it may not be easy to see the difference between some tasks/exercises because two or more tasks/exercises often share the same broad features. It is for this reason that Johnson's (1982:164-72) five principles in a communicative exercise type (see Section 2.7.2.2) are not used in the analysis of the exercises in the survey (see Section 6.4.4).

## 2.6 Tasks

'Tasks' is a very important element in the design of my proposed course (see Chapters 7, 8, and 9). Although the idea of using learning tasks is not new in the field of general education, the concept of 'task' in language teaching was not fully recognised until after the beginning of the communicative movement. The discussion of task-based language learning often involves issues of

the development of teaching materials, and syllabus design and classroom methodology.

### 2.6.1 Definition of 'Task'

The term 'task' has been defined in different ways. In the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning, there are many definitions of 'task'. Long (1985) gives a non-technical, non-linguistic definition: a task is

a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. ... by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. (Long 1985:89)

Richards et al (1985), on the other hand, looks at 'task' from a pedagogical perspective: a task is

an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e., as a response).  
(Richards et al 1985:289)

Breen (1987b) defines 'task' as

any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. (Breen 1987b:23)

Considering the nature and the purpose of the proposed course, I would define a task as a piece of classroom work which (a) has a sense of completeness and can stand alone as a classroom act in its own right, (b) leads learners to practise and/or to use the target language, (c) has six inherent components (i.e., goal, input, activity, teacher role, learner role, and



setting), and (d) is sequenceable. On the surface, this definition is too wide and can be applied to traditional mechanical exercises. However, the justification for this definition is that as a task can be communicative or non-communicative, it is only when the definition is broad that it can include both communicative and non-communicative tasks (see Section 2.6.2 below). The concept of 'task' defined here is different from a traditional exercise in that it is seen as consisting of six components (see Section 2.6.3 below) and having a sense of completeness. It must be made clear here that although tasks can be communicative or non-communicative, the term 'task-based' (see Section 2.5.2 above) is used to mean 'communicatively task-based' (see Section 7.5.2).

### 2.6.2 Task Kinds

There are two main kinds of task in language teaching: 'pedagogic tasks' and 'real-world tasks'. According to Nunan (1989a:40), real-world tasks 'require learners to approximate, in class, to the sorts of behaviours required of them in the world beyond the classroom'; pedagogic tasks, by contrast, 'require learners to do things which it is extremely unlikely they would be called upon to do outside the classroom'. In practice, however, it is often difficult to distinguish these two kinds of task. Real-world tasks are justified on the grounds that they are enabling learners to 'rehearse' (Johnson 1982, Widdowson 1987a, 1990) real-

world behaviours, whereas the justification for pedagogic tasks is that this kind of task helps learners to develop the necessary prerequisite skills for using the target language (e.g., in the case of pattern drills, the necessary fluency and mastery over structural and phonological patterns in the language) in real-life communication (Nunan op. cit.:41).

We can, on the other hand, distinguish between communicative and non-communicative tasks, the former is defined as

a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than on form. (Nunan 1989a:10)

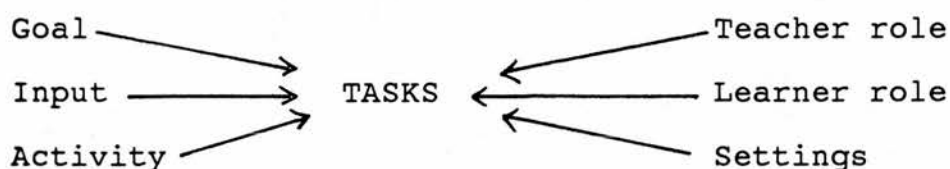
Keeping in mind my definition of 'task' in the previous section and following Nunan's conception of 'communicative task', I would define a non-communicative task by changing the order of two words in Nunan's definition: ... while their attention is principally focused on form rather than on meaning. It should be pointed out that although real-world tasks are often communicative, it does not mean that they are identical with communicative tasks. As Nunan (op. cit.:41-2) observes, some communicative tasks engage learners in activities which are unlikely to occur outside the classroom and have little real-world relevance although they are nevertheless intellectually valid and meaning-focused. It should also be noted that the distinction

between real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks on the one hand and between communicative tasks and non-communicative tasks on the other hand is not hard and fast; therefore, it is better to regard it as a continuum.

### 2.6.3 Components of a Task

Candlin (1987:11) suggests that a task should contain seven key features: input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes, and feedback. Breen (1987b:25) looks at tasks from a different perspective and proposes that the task should be analysed in terms of four basic questions: Why is the task being undertaken? (objective) What is the content of the task? (subject-matter) How is the task to be done? (procedure) Where is the task being done? (settings) Nunan (1989a:11), similarly, proposes that there are six components concerning a task:

Figure 2.4: Components of a task  
(from Nunan 1989a:11)



According to Nunan (op. cit.), 'goals' are the intentions behind the task; that is, a certain task has a certain goal. 'Input' is the data that form the point of departure for the task. 'Activity'<sup>6</sup> specifies what the learner will do with the input. 'Role' refers to the part that the teacher and the learner will play in

carrying out the task. And 'settings' refers to the classroom arrangements for carrying out the task. The components of a task will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

The following task may serve as an example of the illustration of the six components of a task.

-----

Work in pairs. Look at the picture (from Xu 1979:113) and tell each other what the people in the picture are doing.

**A NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICE CENTRE**



goal: to elicit students' utterances of the use of the present progressive tense and the use of some prepositions

Input: a picture

Activity: discussion (negotiation)

Teacher role: director, guide, facilitator, helper

Learner role: interactor, negotiator

Setting: pairwork in the classroom

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It should be noted that the six components are typical of a task. Some tasks may not have all the components, as can be seen in the sample materials (e.g., Tasks 3, Students' Book, does not have explicit input; see Appendix 7).

#### 2.6.3.1 Goals

As was pointed out earlier, goals are the intentions underlying any given task. Any task has one or more goals, either implicit or explicit. For example, the goal for doing pattern drills may be habit formation, or it may be a preparation for another task, whereas the goal for role-plays may be to provide learners with opportunities to use language in communication. The relationship between goals and tasks is not one-to-one. A task may have two or more goals while it is possible for many tasks to share the same goal. Besides, the goal of a task may be short-term or long-term, although the former usually serves the latter. Morrow's (1981:60-1) 'know-what-you-are-doing' principle and Johnson's (1982: 166-67) 'information gap' principle (see Section 2.7.2) are related to this aspect of the task.

#### 2.6.3.2 Input

Input can be verbal (e.g., a text) or non-verbal (e.g., a picture); if verbal, it can be written (e.g., a text) or spoken (e.g., a recording). The range of input is so wide that it is beyond the scope of the present

study to list them here (see Hover 1986, Cook 1989).

The type and amount of input in a course usually depend on the theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and learning, the aims and objectives of the course, the type of learners, and the nature and the length of the course, among other things.

The discussion of input inevitably involves considering the authenticity of input. One of the contributions of the communicative approach to language teaching is the emphasis on the value of authentic materials. The notion of authentic materials was briefly discussed in Section 2.5.2. As Clarke (1989:73) observes, the use of authentic materials has been one of the most characteristic features of materials design in the last 10 or 15 years. The idea of using authentic materials, as indicated by Nunan (1989a:54), is derived from the assumption that 'the most effective way to develop a particular skill is to rehearse that skill in class'. However, the proposal for using authentic materials in ELT has met strong challenges ever since it came into being.

Advocates of the use of authentic materials argue that performance-based data, obtained from real-life language use, 'will be the means by which he [the learner] can bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and an effective capacity to participate in real language events' (Wilkins 1976:79) and that 'artificially restricting the language to which learners are exposed in

the interests of simplified production distorts the language in specific ways' (Willis 1990:45). However, it is also argued by others that unadapted materials may be so linguistically difficult that they may prevent learners from focusing on meaning and force them to focus on form (Clarke 1989:74). Then, it was suggested that authentic simple texts be used. However, truly authentic and simple materials are not easy to obtain:

Despite numerous efforts, I have yet to find the kind of simplification that is useful to non-native readers in books written for native speaking children.  
(Trimble 1985:28)

As early as 1976, Widdowson (1979:165) rejected the idea of always using authentic materials as pedagogical input and questioned the proposal by asking: '...does it follow that all contrivance is necessarily to be avoided and that the only data we should expose learners to should be actual, attested instances of use?' He (Widdowson op. cit.) argues that authenticity is a feature of how people use instances of language, not a quality residing in language. Therefore, for him there is no such thing as authentic language materials because authenticity has to do with and is realised by appropriate response (Widdowson 1978a:80, 1979:171). According to this view, the completion of tasks with inauthentic input can be authentic. Widdowson's argument has led to the discussion of 'activity authenticity' (Nunan 1989a:60), which will be dealt with in Section 2.6.3.3.2 below.



### 2.6.3.3 Activities

In this section, I shall discuss three issues: activity types, activity authenticity, and skill-getting and skill-using activities.

#### 2.6.3.3.1 Activity types

There are different activity typologies in CLT. Littlewood (1981:85-7) distinguishes between two types of learning activities: the pre-communicative activity and the communicative activity. The former consists of 'structural activities' and 'quasi-communicative activities', whereas the latter consists of 'functional communication activities' and 'social interaction activities'. The justification for the combination of both types of activity is on the grounds that 'research findings overwhelmingly support the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience' (Savignon 1991:269, also see Celce-Murcia 1991:462). Although there are many classifications of activity typologies (e.g., Clark 1987:227-29, Pattison 1987, Prabhu 1987:27, 46-47, Willis 1990:57-59; cf. Li et al 1987-1989), I would argue that activities in CLT belong to two typologies: (1) Practice activities; and (2) Transfer activities.

#### (1) The practice activity

Form-focused activities such as pattern drills, gap-fillings, and transformations, which are aimed at

practising language forms, are practice activities. This type of activity helps learners to develop prerequisite skills for later use in real-world situations. The justification for this type of activity is that the practice is a kind of 'investment' (Widdowson 1987a, 1990:132), and it 'will methodically extend the learners' stock of latent language' (Wilkins 1984:78). This type of activity is similar to Littlewood's (1981) 'pre-communicative activity'.

## (2) The transfer activity

Meaning-focused activities such as problem-solving, information-transfer, and discussion are transfer activities, which are sometimes called free practice activities. This type of activity requires students to transfer the forms they have learned into use. In this type of activity, 'learners are meant to apply their newly acquired mastery of linguistic forms to the comprehension and production of communicative language' (Nunan 1989a: 61) and it is through this type of activity that learners rehearse or approximate to behaviours which are similar to or the same as those in the real-world communication. This type of activity is similar to Littlewood's (1981) 'communicative activity'.

### 2.6.3.3.2 Activity authenticity

As indicated in Section 2.6.3.2 above, the discussion of authentic materials has brought about that

of activity authenticity. For scholars such as Widdowson (e.g., 1978a, 1979, 1990), and Candlin and Breen (e.g., Candlin and Breen 1980; Breen 1983, 1985), authenticity is concerned more with the learner's response to and his relationship with teaching materials rather than with the characteristics of teaching materials. Clarke (1989:78) echoes this argument and suggests that authentic materials 'be seen as a matter of what the learner does, or is required to do, with those materials'.

Whether classroom activities should be authentic is a question that has aroused debates and discussions for many years. Clarke and Silberstein (1977:51) argue that 'classroom activities should parallel the "real world" as closely as possible' and that 'since language is a tool of communication, methods and materials should concentrate on the message, not the medium'. Proponents of this argument believe that since the more classroom activities resemble real-world behaviours the more likely learners will perform well in real-world communication, classroom activities should approximate to real-life activities as closely as possible. However, there are others who take a different point of view. Widdowson, for example, points out that in language teaching 'we do not begin with authenticity' because 'authenticity is what the learners should ultimately achieve', and therefore 'it represents their terminal behaviour' (Widdowson 1979:166). For Widdowson, 'what is wanted is a methodology which will ... provide for communicative

competence by functional investment' and such a methodology 'would engage the learners in problem-solving tasks as purposeful activities but without the rehearsal requirement that they should be realistic or "authentic" as natural behaviour' (Widdowson 1987a:71).

It should be pointed out that the aim to help learners to acquire communicative skills does not necessarily require authentic activities. For example, Prabhu believes that there is no need to link classroom activities to the real world:

a procedural syllabus of tasks only envisages constant effort by learners to deploy their language resources in the classroom, and does not attempt either to demarcate areas of real-life use for different stages of teaching or to bring about a 'thorough' learning of use in some functions at each stage. (Prabhu 1987:73)

As I believe that language teaching is 'a way of short-circuiting the slow process of natural discovery' (Widdowson 1990:162) (cf. Sampson 1984:26) and that classroom activities are different from real-world interactions, I would assume that both authentic and inauthentic activities are essential in classroom teaching.

#### 2.6.3.3.3 Skill-getting and skill-using

Rivers and Temperley (1978:3-5) propose a schema of skill-getting and skill-using, which can be applied to the analysis of classroom activities. Briefly, skill-getting activities are those that are concerned with

form-focused practice activities, whereas skill-using activities are meaning-focused activities in which learners are to use the forms they have learned in communicative behaviours. This distinction is similar to that between accuracy and fluency (see Brumfit 1984a), or that between 'pre-communicative' and 'communicative' (Littlewood 1981).

#### 2.6.3.4 Roles

As indicated earlier, 'roles' refers to the part that teachers and learners will play in carrying out learning tasks in the classroom. Different teaching/learning tasks require different roles from teachers and learners. It must be emphasised that tasks carried out in different teaching contexts also require different teacher roles and learner roles. Learner roles and teacher roles are closely related. Giving the learner a certain role in a task requires the teacher to adopt a different role as the two roles are complementary. The issue of teacher and learner roles can be best discussed with examples (see Sections 8.6.1, 9.2, and 9.3).

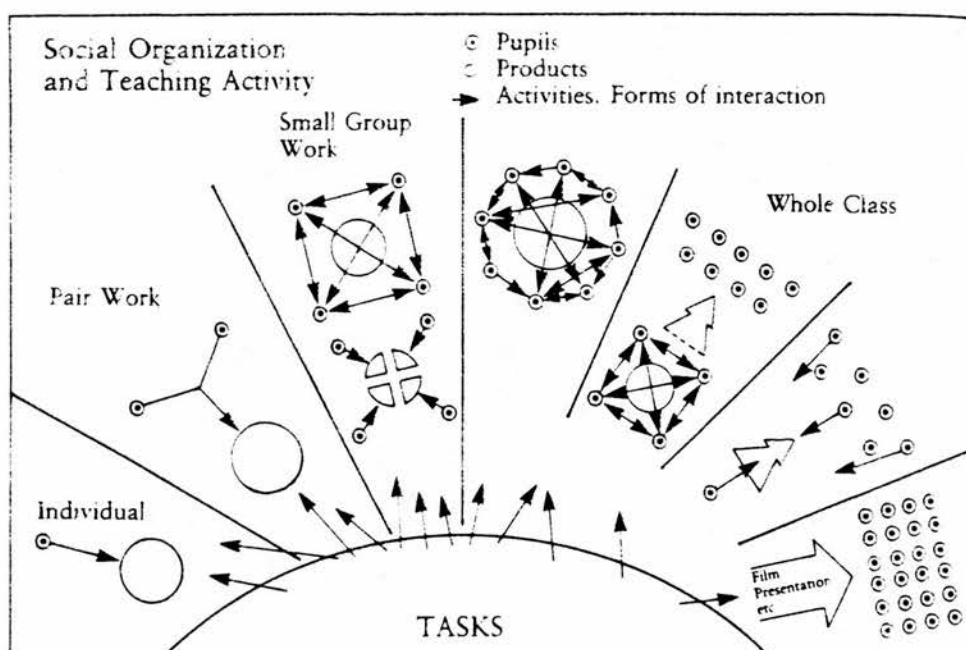
It must be pointed out that the idea of 'roles' is not confined to 'tasks'. 'Roles' as a task component is used in its narrow sense. When 'roles' is viewed as a general factor in a course or curriculum, it is in its broad sense (cf. Widdowson 1987b) (see Section 7.4.2.4).

### 2.6.3.5 Settings

Nunan (1989a:91) points out that 'settings' refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task and the consideration of whether the task is to be carried out wholly or partly outside the classroom.

Wright (1987), on the other hand, gives a useful illustration of the different ways in which learners can be grouped within the classroom activity:

Figure 2.5: Different settings in the classroom  
(from Wright 1987:58)



As will be seen later (e.g., Sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6), the usual classroom groupings in China's ELT classroom are individual work or whole-class work, the latter mainly the one on the right in Wright's diagram (i.e., one-way lecturing).

However, as has been observed (cf. Pica and Doughty 1985, Anderson and Lynch 1988, Nunan 1988b, 1989a), group

work and pairwork are more attractive and successful because they (a) provide students with more opportunities to practise and use the target language and (b) make the learning situation less formal so as to promote students' confidence, among other things. As will be shown in Section 6.6.1.3, the result of the question about classroom groupings in my survey also shows that students like pairwork and group work better than individual work and whole-class work. However, the survey also indicates that individual work and whole-class work still have an important role to play.

All factors considered, I would suggest that different kinds of classroom grouping are important in that they can serve different purposes and that the variety will make learning more interesting.

#### 2.6.3.6 Summary

Although a task is seen as consisting of different elements, they are not separated but interrelated and complementary. The choice of one form in one element will often require the choice of another, although mismatches between the elements are possible.

### 2.7 Communicative Teaching Methodology

As early as 1977, it was widely felt that 'communicative teaching should not simply be a matter of the specification of the elements in a course, but that it should involve a profound change in the methodology' (see



Brumfit 1979a:187). When the communicative movement started in the early 1970s, the focus of discussion was primarily on syllabus design (Roberts 1982, Quinn 1984, Read 1984a). Ten years later it was gradually realised that syllabuses alone could not bring any fundamental changes. It has recently been argued that methodology is the central component of CLT (e.g., Widdowson 1984b, 1987a, 1990; Quinn 1984). Writers such as Quinn (1984: 74), Sinclair and Renouf (1988:145) have even noted that the issue of communicative teaching methodology is now at the centre of applied linguistic research. In Section 2.3, two different interpretations of CLT were surveyed. There I expressed my support for the weak version (i.e., teaching-for-communication). I shall still follow the teaching-for-communication direction in the discussion of methodology. This section will discuss some of the characteristics and implications of communicative teaching methodology.

Johnson (1988a:58) points out that 'there is one model of communicative methodology which may arguably claim to be "standard" ' (cf. Howatt 1984:279)<sup>7</sup>. There have been informative and constructive writings on communicative teaching methodology and this standard model has been developed by scholars such as Widdowson (e.g., 1972/1979, 1978a, 1979, 1984a, 1984b, 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1990), Allen (e.g., 1977, 1983, 1984, 1987), Brumfit (e.g., 1978/1980b, 1979a, 1980a, 1981a, 1981b, 1984a, 1986b), Johnson (e.g., 1979, 1981a, 1981b,

1982, 1988a), Revell (1979), Littlewood (e.g., 1981), Morrow (e.g., 1981), Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), Larsen-Freeman (1986), and Richards and Rodgers (1986) (also see Johnson and Morrow 1978, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Johnson and Morrow 1981, Johnson and Porter 1983, Brumfit 1986a). As is observed by Johnson (1988a:59), the pedigree of the standard model of communicative methodology 'lies within linguistics rather than within the field of language learning'. While I agree with him on this point, I would also say that communicative methodology is influenced, directly or indirectly, by both the theory of language and that of learning (see Section 2.4.2; cf. Johnson 1986, 1988b). As was pointed out earlier (Section 2.4.1), the communicative view of language has four characteristics (Richards and Rodgers 1986:69-73) and there are three principles of an underlying learning theory discerned in CLT practices (Section 2.4.2), which underlie the communicative teaching methodology.

### 2.7.1 Definition of 'Methodology'

'Methodology', in Richards et al (1985:177), has two basic meanings: (1) the study of the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them; (2) such practices, procedures, principles, and beliefs themselves. Richards (1990:35) later states that methodology can be described as 'the activities, tasks, and learning process'; it was

regarded as the theoretical basis of the teacher's assumptions about language and language learning, teacher and learner roles, and learning activities and instructional materials.

In the present study the term 'methodology' is used to include the objectives of the method (in the sense of Richards and Rodgers 1986), the task and activity types, the roles of teachers and learners, the role of instructional materials as well as the classroom techniques, practices and behaviours. In other words, 'methodology' is used to cover both the 'design' except the syllabus (i.e., the content of teaching), and the 'procedure' components in Richards and Rodgers' (1986:16-29) model of 'method'.

### 2.7.2 Aspects of Communicative Methodology

Although much has been written about communicative teaching methodology, few writers have suggested explicit communicative principles with regard to materials writing and classroom teaching procedures, strategies and techniques. Ten years ago, Morrow (1981) believed that communicative methodology was still largely unexplored. He emphasised that although activities such as role-play were much used in classrooms it did not mean that we had a consistent methodology:

A consistent methodology is more than just a collection of activities or techniques. It requires an underlying set of principles in the light of which procedures, activities or techniques can be evaluated,

related and applied. (Morrow 1981:59)

Johnson (1981:11), on the other hand, predicted that 'a communicative methodology will differ significantly from traditional methodology'. I quite agree with Morrow and Johnson here and would point out that although much effort has been spent in exploring communicative methodology there has not been a consistent, well-defined and well-understood communicative teaching methodology, although it may be argued that it is not desirable to have one.

Morrow (1981) proposes five principles of communicative methodology, which are intended to 'guide us in our search for a [communicative] method'<sup>8</sup>. These principles derive from perceptions and understandings of communicative language teaching and learning. They are concerned with general communicative methodology in that they are relevant to materials writing as well as classroom teaching. Johnson (1982), on the other hand, suggests five principles in a communicative exercise type, which are mainly concerned with materials writing although they may be applied to classroom teaching.

#### 2.7.2.1 Principles of communicative methodology

The following are five principles of communicative methodology summarised by Morrow (1981):

Principle 1: Know what you are doing.

Principle 2: The whole is more than the sum of the parts.

Principle 3: The processes are as important as the forms.

Principle 4: To learn it, do it.

Principle 5: Mistakes are not always a mistake  
[sic].

The first principle is concerned with the purpose of doing things in class. The communicative feature 'goal-directed' (see Section 2.5.2) can be said to be derived from this principle. 'Meaning-focused' is related to this principle.

Principle two concerns the operation of language stretches above the sentential level and the language in real situations. Communicative features such as 'authentic', 'integrative', 'appropriate', and 'contextualised' are all related to this principle.

Principle three is about the processes of communication. Morrow proposes three such processes: (a) information gap; (b) choice; and (c) feedback. He states that taken together these three processes 'seem central to the development of any procedure for teaching the communicative use of language' (Morrow 1981:63). The communicative features 'goal-directed', 'meaningful', 'authentic', 'creative', 'integrative', 'appropriate', 'contextualised', 'fluency-based', 'choice-free', 'personalised', 'challenging', 'interesting', and 'motivating' are all related to this principle.

The fourth principle is concerned with the learner's active learning and using of the target language. The

communicative features 'learning-centred', 'task-based', and 'meaning-focused' are related to this principle.

The last principle proposed by Morrow is the nature of the learner's mistakes and the teacher's attitudes towards them. The communicative feature 'intervention-free' is derived from this principle and 'fluency-based' and 'choice-free' are closely related to it.

#### 2.7.2.2 Principles in a communicative task type

Johnson's (1982) five principles, which are mainly concerned with the design of instructional materials, are as follows:

1. The information transfer principle.
2. The information gap principle.
3. The jigsaw principle.
4. The task dependency principle.
5. The correction for content principle.

Information transfer involves the ability to understand and extract information and to transfer it to another form (e.g., from a text to a form/table). The principle stresses the importance of communicative features such as 'meaning-focused', 'meaningful', 'task-based'. It is loosely related to Morrow's 'to learn it, do it' principle.

The information gap principle involves genuine information exchange in the class and 'creates a condition of unexpectedness' (Johnson 1982:167). It can be seen as part of Morrow's third principle (The

processes are as important as the forms). Communicative features such as 'authentic', 'contextualised', 'goal-directed', 'interesting', 'learning-centred', 'task-based' are all related to this principle.

According to the jigsaw principle, students are given different pieces of information and are required to work first individually and then together to exchange information to complete the 'jigsaw'. Students can practise different language skills with tasks embodying the jigsaw principle. Communicative features such as 'challenging', 'contextualised', 'goal-directed', 'integrative', 'interesting', 'learning-centred', 'meaning-focused', 'meaningful', 'motivating', 'task-based' are related to this principle. Morrow's second principle (The whole is more than the sum of the parts) is also related to this principle.

The task dependency principle involves getting the student to utilise information given in the course of a task. According to this principle, 'we create wherever possible a Task 2 which can only be done if a Task 1 has been successfully completed' (Johnson 1982:170). This principle is important because it (a) highlights reasons for doing a Task 1, (b) 'helps to foster in the student an "accountability" for the way he uses language' (loc. cit.), and (c) helps to minimise the difference between real-world and classroom interactions. This principle has more to do with 'task continuity' (Nunan 1989a:119) than with a task in isolation. It is related to Morrow's



second and third principles (see above) and is concerned with features such as 'contextualised', 'goal-directed', 'integrative', 'meaningful', 'task-based'.

The correction for content principle concerns the assessment of students' language production. It stresses the importance of judging students' use of the language on its communicative efficacy rather than its grammatical correctness. This principle is different from the other four in that it has more to do with classroom teaching. The communicative feature 'intervention-free' and Morrow's 'mistakes are not always a mistake' are related to this principle.

It should be noted that the fact that all learning tasks embody certain principles cannot guarantee that the tasks will be used communicatively in any teaching context (Andrews 1983:130). Therefore, teachers' classroom strategies and techniques are very important in the implementation of tasks in the classroom.

#### 2.7.2.3 Aspects of communicative teaching methodology

In discussing communicative methodology, Johnson states that it

derives its inspiration from a revised view of the nature of language and results in an enriched conception of what skills need to be practised in the classroom.

(Johnson 1988a:59)

Clearly, Johnson adopts the view of language as skill and regards language learning as skill learning (cf. Johnson 1986, 1988b; also see Section 2.4). He (Johnson 1988a:

59-61) goes on to exemplify the enriched conception by considering the following four areas:

(a) the teaching of appropriacy, where much has been done on teaching the functional aspect of the language (e.g., the design of notional/functional syllabuses, and of learning tasks which approximate to real-world tasks);

(b) the centrality of message focus, under which principles of information transfer, information gap, and task dependency and the jigsaw principle have played an essential part;

(c) risk-taking skills, which reflects the nature of the 'deep end strategy' (Johnson 1982:193) (i.e., the communicative procedure suggested by Brumfit 1979a:183, see Section 4.5);

(d) combinatorial practice, which is concerned with 'holistic practice which aims to practise sub-skills in combination' (Johnson 1988a:61).

According to Johnson (op. cit.), these are the four major areas in which the new, enriched conception of teaching methodology has made itself felt.

#### 2.7.2.4 Concluding remarks

Although the principles summarised by Morrow (1981) and Johnson (1982) are far from being complete (some of which can be modified), they, together with the aspects identified by Johnson (1988a), are nevertheless at the centre of the search for a standard communicative

methodology. Together with the underlying principles of CLT observed by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983:90-4), White (1983:9-10), Quinn (1984:61-4), Larsen-Freeman (1986:128-130), Richards and Rodgers (1986), and the principles of the learning theory discerned in CLT practices (Richards and Rodgers 1986:72), they form the core of a communicative teaching methodology.

### 2.7.3 One Methodology or Many Methodologies

While it may be true that the search for a communicative teaching methodology is going on, it should be remembered that methodology

is not ... something fixed, a set of rigid principles and procedures that the teacher must conform to. (Richards 1990:35)

Rather, it is dynamic in different teaching/learning situations. Different assumptions about the nature of language and language learning, the nature of classroom activities, practices, procedures, techniques, and learning experiences will encourage or even produce different methodologies. As with communicative approaches in general, there is no uniform communicative teaching methodology. Besides, it must also be remembered that 'there is no single method ... which is capable of accounting for all aspects of language and language learning' (Allen 1987:51; cf. Wilkins 1974:43, Johnson 1978:25-26, Widdowson 1980:169, Prabhu 1989). As Chastain (1976:91) puts it, 'the important question is not which method of teaching is better, but which method

is better for which students' (cited in Allen loc. cit.). Therefore, we have to both understand which principles, practices, strategies, techniques, procedures are of a more communicative nature than others and also search for the most appropriate methodology for the given educational context.

## 2.8 The Status of Grammar in CLT

Since the proposed course is a grammar course within a communicative framework, the discussion of the status of grammar in CLT is absolutely essential. This section will discuss the importance of grammar in CLT.

As the communicative approach was revolutionary in that the focus of language teaching moved to functional meaning and communication, when it was first introduced it was believed that grammar was no longer necessary in the teaching curriculum. As Howatt (1988:23) observes, grammar in CLT has become 'an embarrassment' and 'nobody is very sure what to do about it'. However, a close examination of the work by proponents of CLT will reveal that the learning of forms is a central part of the whole learning process and that the learning of grammar is essential in learning to use the target language in real-world communication. For example, as early as 1978, writers such as Wilkins (1978:11), Morrow (1978:18), Johnson (1978:29) argue that grammar cannot be neglected in the design of notional/functional materials and that grammar has not become less important because the

importance of appropriate use of language has been identified. Besides, Wilkins, who argues that a notional/functional syllabus not only is superior to a structural syllabus but also does not neglect the grammatical system of a language (Wilkins 1976), reiterates the importance of grammar by saying that 'the notion that an individual can develop anything other than a rudimentary communicative ability without an extensive mastery of grammatical system is absurd' (Wilkins 1981:85). In fact, it has always been strongly argued by applied linguists and language teachers that the status of grammar in CLT cannot be overlooked. Widdowson is one of the applied linguists who again and again argues that 'a communicative approach ... does not involve the rejection of grammar' (Widdowson 1988:154). He even regards it as nonsense to suppose that 'what is commendable about a communicative approach to language teaching is that it does not, as a structural approach does, have to get learners to puzzle their heads with grammar' (Widdowson 1990:97). Recently, it has been observed that grammar is widely accepted as an essential resource in teaching and learning language for communicative purposes (Harmer 1988:19; Nunan 1989a:13) and that 'communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar' (Savignon 1991:268). Harmer has noted that the communicative movement in language teaching 'has provoked a debate about exactly where grammar fits into the curriculum' and the results of the

discussion shows 'a renewed interest in, and emphasis on, the teaching and study of grammar in the general EFL classroom' (Harmer 1988:19).

Seeing that the importance of grammar is again realised in language teaching, Alexander claims strongly that 'grammar is being taught again not despite but because of "the communicative revolution" ' (Alexander 1988b:59, his emphasis). Widdowson (1990:40) has observed that there has been 'a recognition that grammar has an importance in language learning which a too enthusiastic pursuit of functions has tended to ignore' and that 'grammar reference books and exercises of all kinds ... are now springing out of publishing houses'. Dirven (1990:4) even predicts that a new 'grammar boom' is approaching.

As indicated earlier (see Section 1.5), the concept of grammatical competence in CLT has been enlarged; grammar is no longer regarded as only concerning itself with syntactical and morphological rules, but also with rules of semantics, discourse, pragmatics, and other aspects of communicative competence. Therefore, meaning and use are of great importance in the teaching and learning of grammar.

## 2.9 Problems in CLT

Although there are potential advantages of the communicative approach over other approaches (see Sections 2.2 and 2.5), there are many problems in CLT.

For example, Brumfit (1984e) raises a number of questions: (a) the question of determining learners' needs objectively; (b) the question of defining authenticity of classroom materials; (c) the question of establishing a syllabus appropriate to local conditions; (d) the question of reconciling conversational, literary, and intellectual objectives. Howatt points out that 'the switch of attention from teaching the language system to teaching the language as [for] communication highlighted a potentially difficult problem in organising syllabuses, materials, and other forms of classroom activity' (Howatt 1984:277). Richards and Rodgers (1986:83) remind us that problems in CLT include the applicability of the approach at all levels in a language programme, the suitability in ESL and EFL situations (cf. Burnaby and Sun 1989), the abandonment or revision of structural syllabuses, and the evaluation of CLT. As was pointed out earlier (Sections 1.6 and 2.2), owing to the lack of a well-defined theory of communicative competence and of the communicative approach, the development of CLT materials and the classroom methodology are two major issues confronting materials writers and classroom teachers. There is a risk that CLT materials are written and the classroom activities are conducted not according to well-defined and well-understood principles but by experience and rule-of-thumb (Allen 1983:24).

If the Chinese context is taken into consideration, there are other problems: (a) As the communicative



approach often goes against the traditional approach, it will meet opposition from educationalists, teachers and learners. (b) If CLT is to be successful, the training of competent teachers is essential. However, it is difficult or impossible for every teacher of English to receive professional training, at least in the next ten years or so. (c) Because of (b), many teachers may prefer the reading-grammar-translation method and would be reluctant to adopt a communicative methodology. (d) Both teachers and students may be unwilling to change their roles in the classroom or their way of teaching/learning (cf. Utley 1986:55). (e) Students may feel perplexed when they are taught in a communicative way, especially in the initial stages. (f) As there are many students in one class, it is not easy, even if it is possible, to carry out communicative tasks/activities in the classroom.

Recently, there have been observations (e.g., Sun 1985; Burnaby and Sun 1989; cf. Maley 1984a; Sampson 1984) that it is no easy job to implement the communicative approach in the Chinese context (see Section 5.7). All this shows that if a communicative approach to ELT is to be adopted or adapted in China, then a survey of the teaching situation is more than necessary. The problem of adopting a communicative approach in the Chinese context will be discussed in more detail in Sections 5.7.

## 2.10 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with the reasons for the communicative revolution. It then moved to variations of CLT, and two versions of CLT were identified. It was then argued that within the weak version of CLT there were two mainstreams represented by the work of Wilkins and Widdowson respectively, the former focusing on syllabus and the latter on methodology, with Johnson taking an eclectic view. The theoretical bases of the weak version of CLT were then surveyed, with the conclusion that CLT, unlike situational language teaching or the audiolingual method, does not rest upon a single theory of language. After that, the theory of language and the theory of learning within CLT were examined. Following that, some characteristics of CLT, from which the communicative features are derived, were identified. The important issue of 'tasks' was then discussed. Communicative teaching methodology, which is believed to be now at the centre of CLT, or even of applied linguistic research, was surveyed and it was pointed out that there is no universally accepted communicative teaching methodology. As the present study is concerned with the design of a grammar course, the importance of grammar in CLT was reiterated and it was then argued that grammar should not be rejected in CLT, because grammar is a means to a communicative end. Finally, some of the problems concerning CLT in general and the Chinese ELT context in particular were reviewed.

## CHAPTER 3: SYLLABUS DESIGN

### 3.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous chapters centred on communicative competence and CLT. As syllabus design has had a central role, at least in Britain, in the weak version of CLT (cf. Johnson 1982, Roberts 1982; Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983; Quinn 1984; Read 1984a), this chapter is devoted to some issues concerning syllabus design in CLT. It will begin with a brief account of syllabus design in general. Then it will go on to look at Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses. After that, the complexity of form-meaning correspondences will be examined, which will be followed by a discussion of the relationship between syllabus and methodology on the one hand and syllabus and CLT on the other. Finally, the notion of 'syllabus' in the Chinese ELT context will be reviewed.

### 3.2 Syllabus Design: An Overview

In the early 1980s, it was not so difficult to determine the contours of syllabus design, since it was generally accepted that there were only three main types of language syllabus: the structural<sup>1</sup>, the situational, and the notional/functional (Wilkins 1976; Bell 1981:53; Furey 1984; Richards et al 1985:283). The focus of discussion then was mainly on the differences between the structural and the notional/functional syllabuses. Since

1983, there have been important collections of papers on syllabus design (e.g., Johnson and Morrow 1978, Read 1984b, Brumfit 1984d, Tickoo 1987), apart from works by single authors (e.g., Johnson 1982, Yalden 1983a, 1987a, Dubin and Olshtain 1986, Krahne 1987, White 1988). The focus of discussion has since shifted from discussions of structural and notional/functional syllabuses to debates about product-oriented and process-oriented syllabuses (Breen 1987a, Nunan 1988a, Yalden 1988, White 1988, Melrose 1991). Therefore, it is not easy to begin our discussion without first narrowing the focus. In the following sections, I shall (a) distinguish between the product-oriented and the process-oriented syllabus, and (b) define the term 'syllabus' to serve the discussion, and (c) describe three types of syllabus.

### 3.2.1 Product-oriented and Process-oriented

Product-oriented syllabuses are also known as language-based, content, or propositional syllabuses (Breen 1987a). This type of syllabus can be planned, pre-ordained, and imposed on teachers and students; thus it is sometimes called a fixed syllabus (Stern 1984). According to Breen (1987a), Nunan (1988a), and White (1988), the structural, the situational, and the notional/functional syllabuses all belong to this type of syllabus. Breen states that this type of syllabus represents 'what is to be achieved through teaching and learning as formal statements' (Breen 1987a:160). This

type of syllabus focuses on the knowledge and skills presented in the plan which the learners should gain as a result of teaching and learning (Nunan 1988a:27); that is, the focus is on WHAT is to be achieved in the teaching/learning process.

By contrast, process-oriented syllabuses are open, negotiable, and interactive (Candlin 1984, Breen 1984, 1987a), rather than fixed, planned, pre-ordained, or imposed. The procedural syllabus (Prabhu 1984, 1987), and the task-based syllabus (Candlin and Murphy 1987) belong to this type. Such syllabuses attempt to represent knowledge of how correctness, appropriacy, and meaningfulness can be achieved at the same time in the learning process (Breen 1987a:160). According to Breen, this type of syllabus organises and represents what is to be achieved through teaching and learning in terms of HOW a learner may engage his communicative competence in performing different tasks. In other words, it focuses on the learning experiences themselves.

The main difference between the product-oriented and the process-oriented syllabus is that the former stresses the importance of the pre-specification of linguistic or other content or skill objectives (White 1988:45) while the latter 'aims to immerse the learners in real-life communication without any artificial preselection or arrangement of items' (Allen 1984:65). 'Syllabus' in product-oriented syllabuses is an 'a priori syllabus'

whereas in process-oriented syllabuses it is an 'a posteriori syllabus' or a retrospective syllabus (Richards et al 1985:16)<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.2.2 Definition of 'Syllabus'

The term 'syllabus' has not been widely used in North America (Stern 1984) nor has syllabus design been a major focus of discussion there (Yalden 1988) until recently. Terms such as 'course of study', 'curriculum'<sup>3</sup>, or 'program' have been used instead, which cover roughly the same ground (Stern, Yalden, *op. cit.*). Besides, some writers use the term 'syllabus' metaphorically, as in 'the learner's built-in syllabuses' (Corder 1967), which refers to 'some in-built mechanism or series of abilities developed unconsciously as learners have contact with language' rather than a conscious plan (Brumfit 1984c:233). The term 'syllabus' in Prabhu's 'procedural syllabus', on the other hand, indicates 'what is to be done in the classroom rather than what parts of the contents are to be learned' (Prabhu and Carroll 1980:2, cited in Brumfit *op. cit.*:233) (also see Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 80-83).

Following Richards et al (1985), Allen (1984), Widdowson (1984b, 1990), among others, I shall regard a syllabus as

a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught. (Richards et al 1985:283)

or

a specification of what units will be



taught (as distinct from how they will be taught, which is a matter for methodology).  
(Allen 1984:61)

The term 'syllabus' here is in its restricted sense. As we can see from the quotations, this narrow sense draws a clear distinction between content (syllabus design) and methodology and focuses primarily on the former. However, 'syllabus' has a broad sense. For those who take the broad view, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate content from methodology. Candlin is one of those who are for the broad view, for he doubts 'whether it was possible to separate so easily ... content from ... method or procedure' (Candlin 1984:32).

Since I believe that content (what is to be taught) can be separated from methodology (how something is to be taught), from now on I shall use the term 'syllabus', unless specified, in its narrow sense. Also, in the rest of the discussion, my concern is principally on the product-oriented syllabuses, to be more specific, on the structural and the notional/functional syllabus.

As is pointed out by Johnson (1982:33), a course designer's syllabus derives from a linguist's description of the language. Therefore, a syllabus is a selection of what is to be taught from a description of what could be taught (i.e., a grammar) (cf. Mitchell 1981, 1990a). A syllabus is only as good as the description of language that the syllabus is selected from. It is because of this that Mitchell (1981) called for the incorporation of the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions of the



language into the communicative description of the language. For Mitchell, the reason why notional/functional syllabuses are accused of being accumulative rather than generative is because they are not based on a systematic, comprehensive and functional description of language (i.e., what he calls 'a communicative-pedagogical grammar'). The lack of a form-meaning-use description of the English language has led to many problems in syllabus design in CLT (cf. Mitchell 1981, 1990a, 1990b, Johnson 1982:34, Furey 1984).

### 3.2.3 Three Types of Language Syllabus

Although there have been many proposals and classifications of syllabus types (see e.g., Johnson 1982, Yalden 1983a, Richards and Rodgers 1986, Krahne 1987, White 1988, Richards 1990), in the following discussion the focus will be on three well-established types of syllabus -- structural, situational, and notional/functional -- because they are of more relevance to the present study.

The most well-known language-teaching syllabuses, as summarised by Bell (1981) and Richards et al (1985), may be based on (a) grammatical items and vocabulary, (b) the language needed for different types of situations, and (c) meanings and communicative functions. Thus, there are three different types of language-teaching syllabus (Bell 1981):

- (1) The structural syllabus, which assumes that what

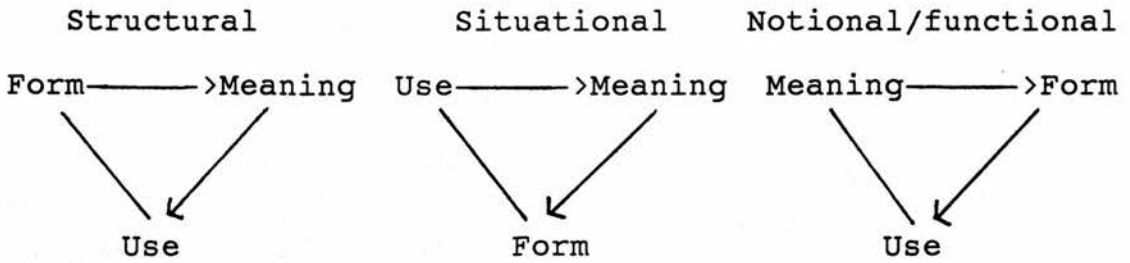
the learner should learn is a list of language items and a set of grammatical rules. The view of language and that of learning underlying this type of syllabus are that language is a grammatical system of rules and that learning a language consists of learning that system and the lexicon.

(2) The situational syllabus, which would try to provide the learner with the language items and skills needed in predictable situations. The view of language and that of learning are that language consists of patterns of social use and that language learning implies becoming proficient in using the language in social situations.

(3) The notional/functional syllabus, which attempts to define the learner's communication needs in terms of meanings rather than forms and provide him with the notions and functions for communication. The view of language and that of learning are that language is a system of meanings and that learning a language consists of learning how to mean.

These three types of syllabus can be distinguished in terms of the relationships between form (syntax and lexicon), meaning (semantics), and use (pragmatics and discourse). According to Bell (1981:56-7), the structural syllabus moves from form to meaning to use, the situational syllabus from use to meaning to form, and the notional syllabus from meaning to form to use.

Figure 3.1: Form, meaning, and use within syllabus types (adapted from Bell 1981:57)



Although the situational syllabus<sup>4</sup> is a major type of syllabus, I do not intend to discuss it further, for two basic reasons. Firstly, as Bell (op. cit.:54) observes, there has not been any true situational syllabus in language teaching so far. Therefore, the discussion of this type of syllabus does not seem very necessary, at least for the present study. Secondly, there is no general agreement on exactly where this type of syllabus belongs (Yalden 1983a:34). For example, Wilkins (1976) regards it as basically semantic<sup>5</sup>, and therefore as more or less the same as the notional/functional syllabus, whereas Canale and Swain (1980:2) prefer to subsume it under either the structural or the 'communicative' syllabus. Mackey (1977) claims that it is better classified with the structural syllabus (see Yalden loc. cit.).

#### 3.2.4 Selection and Gradation

In syllabus design, selection and gradation are two important stages (Mackey 1965). Both selection and gradation are more concerned with teaching/learning than the description of language, because a teaching syllabus

is different from a description of language, though the former is selected from the latter (cf. Morrow 1978:19, Johnson 1981a:8-9, 1982:32, Mitchell 1981:103-04). The processes of selection and gradation are related to the learning objectives and purposes and learner factors, among other things. In the design of a notional/functional syllabus, the selection of content in syllabus design involves a certain amount of arbitrary decision-making about which forms to match with which functions (Nunan 1988a:85) because there is no direct one-to-one relationship between grammatical forms and linguistic functions/notions. On the other hand, as Wilkins (1976:55) argues, 'there is no way in which the actual meanings that people will want to express can be predicted'. However, as Wilkins (*loc. cit.*) puts it, the fact that the actual forms that learners will need to produce cannot be predicted 'does not prevent one from arming the learner with a knowledge of the general rules of the grammatical system' so that he will be able to create sentences/utterances needed for particular communicative encounters.

With the structural syllabus, gradation is less difficult than that of the notional/functional syllabus because there is a generally accepted structural description of the language. As to gradation of the notional/functional syllabus, there are three possible criteria: (a) simplicity, (b) priority of needs, and (c) sequencing potential (Johnson 1982:71-72). The criterion

'priority of needs', also known as 'utility' (useful to the learner) (Bell 1981, Gibbons 1984), is the most important one because it takes 'target needs' and 'learning needs' (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:54; Munby 1978) as the starting point. The justification for the utility criterion is that as the purpose of learning is to learn to use the language in real-world communication what learners immediately need and what is more useful should be taught first. In the processes of selection and gradation, one should also consider elements such as cultural factors, educational factors, administrative/organisational factors, learner factors, teacher factors, and materials factors (Maley 1984b, Gibbons 1984). Ideally, notions and functions should be selected and graded by a group of teachers who know well both what the learners need to do in the target situation (target needs) and what learners need to do in order to learn (learning needs) and who are qualified (e.g., have received formal training in applied linguistics) to select and grade both notions/functions and linguistic forms. The well-known 'simplicity' criterion of the structural approach to syllabus design is not always applicable to the selection and gradation of notions and functions for two basic reasons. The first reason is concerned with the description of form-meaning relationship. Unlike linguistic items, notions and functions are not easily classified as 'easy' or 'difficult' (cf. Johnson 1982:92). The second reason is

concerned with learning a second language. As foreign language learners usually have a stock of notions and functions in their first language, their attention should be directed to linguistic realisations for extant notions and functions rather than to the mastery of notions and functions themselves (cf. Gibbons 1984:140).

### 3.3 Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses

The idea of notions was developed mainly within the Council of Europe Project, where the main interest was to develop language courses on a unit-credit system. In 1976 Wilkins published his book Notional Syllabuses, which argues that structural syllabuses are inadequate in teaching language for communication because

even when we have described the grammatical (and lexical) meaning of a sentence we have not accounted for the way in which it is used as an utterance. (Wilkins 1976:10)

Wilkins also contends that the notional syllabus is superior to the structural syllabus because it considers the communicative facts of language from the beginning without neglecting grammatical and situational factors (Wilkins op. cit.:19).

#### 3.3.1 Notions and Functions

Wilkins (1976) proposes the use of 'notion' as the main unit on which the syllabus would be based, and suggests some notional categories for three types of meaning.

(1) Conceptual meaning, which covers 'ideational', 'cognitive', or 'propositional' meaning. In general this type of meaning is referential meaning and is concerned with expressions of perceptions, processes, states, and abstractions, and the meaning of lexical items. This type of meaning is brought together under the heading semantico-grammatical categories, such as time, duration, frequency, sequence, and quantity.

(2) Modal meaning, which has to do with the speaker's attitudes towards and his degree of certainty of what he is saying (or writing). This meaning can be expressed by a variety of linguistic devices that languages possess. This type of meaning is put under the heading categories of modal meaning.

(3) Functional meaning, which concerns 'the function of the sentence (utterance) as a whole in the larger context in which it occurs' (Wilkins op. cit.:22). This type of meaning incorporates speech acts by which speakers perform different functions such as praising, assessing, suggesting, persuading, apologising. These types of language use are grouped under the heading categories of communicative function. Wilkins reminds one that a sentence not only conveys information; when uttered, it performs a role both in relation to preceding utterances on the one hand and as part of the interactive processes involving the participants on the other (Wilkins loc. cit.).



It is a pity that Wilkins does not provide a precise definition of the term 'notion' when he explains the three types of meaning. The lack of a rigorous definition of the term has brought theoretical and conceptual problems (Furey 1984:7; cf. Widdowson 1990:41). It seems that Wilkins' term 'notion' incorporates 'function' (Wilkins 1978:10, Johnson 1982:38, Widdowson 1990:41), as he uses the former to refer to the three types of meaning.

### 3.3.2 Synthetic and Analytic

Wilkins argues that the numerous language teaching strategies can be put into two conceptually distinct types of teaching strategy: synthetic and analytic (Wilkins 1976:1). A synthetic language teaching strategy, as Wilkins defines it, is

one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built up. (Wilkins op.cit.:2)

In contrast with synthetic strategies, Wilkins describes analytic strategies as follows:

In analytic approaches there is no attempt at this careful linguistic control of the teaching environment. (Wilkins loc. cit.)

According to Wilkins, in analytic strategies components of language are not treated as building blocks which are progressively accumulated. Instead, the whole chunk of language is presented for the learner to internalise in a

less cumulative way. Within the analytic strategy, 'the learner's task is to approximate his own linguistic behaviour more and more closely to the global language' (Wilkins loc. cit.). Conversely, within the synthetic strategy, 'the learner's task is to re-synthesise the language that has been broken down into a large number of smaller pieces' (Wilkins loc. cit.).

These two different teaching strategies can be used as procedures for developing language syllabuses. It is sometimes said that 'the synthetic strategy produces a structural syllabus' (Yalden 1983a:22) whereas the analytic strategy a notional one, but this is arguable. According to Wilkins (1976:1-2), Shaw (1977/1982:81), Yalden (1983a:33) and Richards et al (1985:285), structural (or grammatical, or formal) syllabuses belong to the synthetic strategy, whereas notional/functional (or communicative, or contextual<sup>6</sup>) syllabuses belong to the analytic strategy. However, there are writers (e.g., Widdowson 1978b/1979; Johnson 1979, 1981b; cf. Brumfit 1979b/1980b) who argue strongly that Wilkins' version of the notional syllabus is synthetic rather than analytic. Nunan (1988a) concludes that notional/functional syllabuses are basically synthetic, because when they began to appear, 'they looked very similar to the structural syllabuses they were meant to replace' (Nunan 1988a:37).

It seems that now there is general agreement (see e.g., Breen 1987a, Nunan 1988a, White 1988) that both

structural and notional syllabuses are product-oriented, therefore synthetic rather than analytic. However, it should be noted that the synthetic strategy, like the analytic one, can contribute to CLT. In other words, both synthetic and analytic strategies can help learners to acquire both the knowledge and skills/abilities they need in using language in real-life communication (cf. Morrow 1981:61).

### 3.3.3 Summary

To conclude, Wilkins' notional syllabus is product-oriented and synthetic rather than process-oriented and analytic; it focuses on accumulation, since the relationship between form and function is neglected in the syllabus. Despite the fact that there are problems with the notional syllabus, its proposal, nevertheless, sharpens 'our perception of what is required of a syllabus' (Widdowson 1978b/1979:249), when our focus is on developing learners' communicative abilities; it also forces us to think why a meaning-based syllabus is not as generative as a form-based one, thus leading us to attempts to design a generative, semantics-based syllabus (cf. Mitchell 1981, 1990a, 1990b, Ferguson 1991).

## 3.4 Complexity of Form-meaning Correspondences

Before discussing the form-meaning correspondences, it is of importance to define the terms 'notion' and 'function'. Notions refer to meanings and concepts such

as 'time', 'quantity', 'duration', 'location', and functions refer to speech acts such as 'requesting', 'suggesting', 'promising', 'describing'. In Wilkins (1976), as the term 'notion' is used to refer to three types of meaning (conceptual, modal, functional) or two kinds of category (semantic and pragmatic) (see Section 3.3 above), it incorporates functions. By contrast, Halliday's use of 'function' incorporates notions (Widdowson 1990:41). To follow Widdowson (*op. cit.*), the term 'notion' will be used to refer to Wilkins' conceptual and modal meanings (*i.e.*, semantico-grammatical categories and categories of modal meaning) and the term 'function' to refer to functional meaning (*i.e.*, categories of communicative function).

Having considered the problem of terminology, I now return to the form-meaning correspondences. The relationship between form and meaning is a complicated one, because there is no one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning (Morrow 1978:18). As early as 1971, Halliday convincingly illustrated how the function of 'scolding a naughty child' can be expounded in different forms (Halliday 1973:73). A language function can be realised in many forms. For example, the function of 'ordering' can be expressed in at least five forms (Allen 1977), as is shown in the following table:

Table 3.1: The realisation of a function  
(adapted from Allen 1977)

Function	Form	Realisation
Ordering	a. Imperative	Please finish that letter.
	b. Conditional	It would be better if you finished that letter.
	c. Infinitive	We do expect you to finish that letter.
	d. Modal	You must finish that letter.
	e. Participial	You should have no difficulty in finishing that letter.

Similarly, the same notion can be expressed by different forms. For example, the 'sub-notion' 'future time' (belonging to the notion 'time') can be expressed in English by at least five different forms (Leech 1971:51, cf. Bell 1981:150, Morrow 1978:18), as is shown below.

Table 3.2: The realisation of a notion

Notion	Form	Realisation
Future time	a. Will/shall + infinitive (future tense)	They will cycle to work tomorrow.
	b. Be going to + infinitive	They are going to cycle to work tomorrow.
	c. Be + verb + ing (progressive tense)	They are cycling to work tomorrow.
	d. Present tense	They cycle to work tomorrow.
	e. Will/shall + progressive infinitive	They will be cycling to work tomorrow.

By contrast, a form can be used to express many functions, as the following example shows:

Table 3.3: Functions expressed by a form  
(adapted from Yalden 1983a:40)

Form	Function	Realisation
Imperative	a. Ordering b. Pleading c. Advising d. Warning e. Suggesting	Open the door. Release me now. Buy Canada Saving Bonds. Don't go in there. Try this one on.

It should be pointed out that the discussion here is only concerned with form-meaning (form-function) correspondence at the sentential level. If use is taken into consideration, then the relationship becomes more complicated. For example, the same utterance can express many different functions in different contexts, as the following illustrates:

- a. Finish the dish; it will do you good.  
(suggesting/advising)
- b. Finish the dish, and you'll feel sick.  
(warning)
- c. Finish the dish, or I won't take you out.  
(threatening/ordering)
- d. Finish the dish, please; you're too thin.  
(pleading)
- e. Finish the dish; you've wasted enough.  
(complaining)

In actual use, these utterances will have different paralinguistic features, which make the functions more explicit. In the above five sentences, the (social) role relationship holding between the participants (i.e.,

speaker and listener) in the five situations in the writer's mind is parent to child. If the relationship between the addresser and addressee is changed and/or if the sentences operate at the discoursal level, then the functions will also change. This is only an example to show the complexity of the relationship between form, meaning, and use.

### 3.5 Syllabus, Methodology, and CLT

In this section, the relationship between syllabus and methodology on the one hand and that between syllabus and CLT on the other will be discussed respectively.

#### 3.5.1 Syllabus and Methodology

As was pointed out earlier, I am using 'syllabus' in the sense of a specification of contents, not a set of classroom instructions for the learning activity, nor a presentation of learning processes and procedures in the classroom. The relationship between syllabus and methodology is too important an issue to be neglected in language teaching. The discussion of syllabus will inevitably invite that of methodology. To use Widdowson's words, 'One cannot sensibly talk about either in dissociation from the other' (1986b:40).

In a structural syllabus, the teaching content is a list of structures and the learner's immediate need is often defined as a list of language items and a set of grammatical rules. It is designed on the assumption that



the internalisation of grammatical rules will afford the most effective preparation for communicative encounter in real life (Widdowson 1990:131). This type of syllabus is criticised because it does not have an immediate communicative purpose, nor does it help to yield a quick return on time and effort invested (cf. Johnson 1982:82). In a notional/functional syllabus, the teaching content is a list of notions and functions and their realisations in form, and the learner's need is defined as meanings and concepts needed in communication. It is believed that this type of syllabus is better than the structural one because the learning content is more immediately relevant to what the learner will need to do with the language once he has learned it. In other words, this type of syllabus is associated with learning courses which have 'high surrender value' (Wilkins 1976:69, Johnson 1982:82).

However, there has been the warning that the adoption of a notional/functional syllabus does not guarantee that we are going to teach our students to communicate (Morrow 1981:60) nor that the teaching is communication-oriented, nor does it entail the adoption of a communicative methodology. This is what Howatt has to say on this matter:

One of the common misconceptions associated with the 'notional/functional' approach ... is that the specification of the functional objectives ensures the adoption of a communicative methodology in order to reach them.  
(Howatt 1984:283)

Whether a syllabus will help learners to achieve communicative behaviour depends largely on how it is implemented in materials writing and especially classroom management, not on how it is organised, because what happens in the learners' learning process is not directly determined by the syllabus but is partly 'a consequence of how the syllabus is methodologically mediated by the teacher' (Widdowson 1987a:65; cf. Andrews 1983) in the teaching process. Nevertheless, to say that a syllabus does not determine the adoption of a methodology does not mean that the choice of a particular methodology can be made without considering the syllabus type, since methodology and syllabus are closely linked (see Section 2.3.4). Widdowson, in fact, ignores the close inter-relationship between the syllabus and the methodology when he says that

it is perfectly possible for a notional syllabus to be implemented by a methodology which promotes mechanistic habit formation and in effect is focused on grammar; and conversely for a grammatical syllabus to be actualised by a methodology which develops a genuine capacity for communication.

(Widdowson 1984b:26)

As the syllabus and the methodology are elements of a unified whole (i.e., a teaching/learning programme), it is hard to believe that the choice of one does not affect and/or influence the other. Widdowson's belief (cf. Yalden 1987b:48) in methodology leads him to the claim that CLT is a matter of methodology rather than anything else (Widdowson 1984b, 1987a, 1990). Therefore, it is

not surprising when he says that there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus (see Stern 1984:8, Widdowson 1984b:26, 1990:130).

It may be true that in some ELT contexts (e.g., in many European countries) syllabus is of little importance compared with methodology. If this is the case, then Widdowson's belief is acceptable when the discussion is confined to such contexts. However, in China's ELT situation, syllabus and methodology are equally important because, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, ELT is often associated with 'textbook-centredness' -- the classroom teaching methodology is usually determined by the instructional materials. It is for this reason that I cannot agree with Widdowson's methodology-dominated claim.

To conclude, syllabus is closely linked with methodology because they are different elements of a unified whole. However, the choice of one does not determine the choice of the other, though it does affect the choice. It should be remembered that the syllabus type, whether structural, notional/functional, or whatever, does not guarantee that the learning is communication-oriented, nor does it determine the mode of the implementation of the syllabus. Following the definition of 'syllabus' given in Section 3.2.2, I would use the term 'syllabus' in its more restricted sense to exclude the component of methodology because content (and its organisation) and methodology can be separated and

because contemporary discussions of syllabus types usually focus on the content of learning and its organisation rather than on the teaching methodology (Furey 1984:4).

### 3.5.2 Syllabus and CLT

Having discussed the relationship between syllabus and methodology, I now turn to the issue of syllabus and CLT. I would agree with Widdowson (1984b:26, 1990:130) that there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus, because the term 'communicative' has nothing to do with the description of language or the language system itself, nor has it anything to say about how a language system is described or broken down for the purpose of learning and teaching; 'communicative' can only be used of methodology employed to implement the syllabus. Therefore, it is a misconception to regard one syllabus as more communicative than another. However, a certain syllabus typology is usually closely related to a certain teaching approach/method. For example, the structural syllabus, which reflects the thinking of structural linguistics, is associated with the audiolingual method (Richards and Rodgers 1986). By contrast, a notional/functional syllabus is more closely related to CLT than is a structural one (cf. Johnson 1981a:11), because it stresses the importance of teaching learners to use language in real-life communication and because it is arranged according to meanings learners need to express

through language and functions they will use the language for. A notional/functional syllabus is a reflection of a communicative view of language applied to syllabus design; it has more implications for a communicative methodology in both materials writing and classroom teaching than a structural syllabus. Therefore, I believe that it has advantages over a structural syllabus because it starts with a classification of meanings (related to their grammatical expression) rather than a classification of forms (related to their meaning). The justification for defining language content in terms of notional/functional units is that they are more immediately relevant to learners' target needs because once they have been learned they can be used in communicative encounters.

To conclude, although a notional/functional syllabus itself is no more communicative than is a structural one, it is more closely associated with CLT because it reflects a communicative view of language and carries more implications for a communicative methodology. Therefore, in a communication-oriented language programme, a notional/functional syllabus is potentially superior to a structural syllabus.

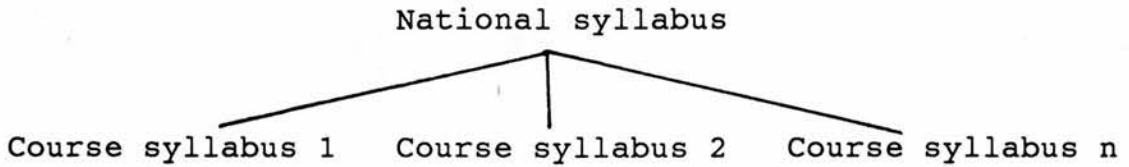
### 3.6 'Syllabus' in the Chinese Context

In this section, the term 'syllabus' in relation to ELT in the Chinese context will be examined. 'Syllabus' in the Chinese ELT context is used to include both

teaching content and methodology.

There are two levels of language syllabus in the Chinese ELT context: (a) the national syllabus, and (b) course syllabuses<sup>7</sup>. The national English syllabus (e.g., CNESSTE 1989) is a multi-dimensional syllabus (cf. Wilkins 1981, Johnson 1982, Gibbons 1984), which is made up of five strands: phonetics and phonology, grammar, vocabulary, notions and functions, communicative skills (CNESSTE 1989). A syllabus at the national level is in fact what Johnson (1981a:9, 1982:32) calls a 'syllabus inventory'<sup>8</sup>. A course syllabus, by contrast, is a specification of teaching content selected by different materials writers, who base their course syllabus on one or more strands of the national syllabus. Ideally, it would be better to design a course syllabus by selecting content from the five strands in the national syllabus. In practice, it may be an impossible task, since so far there has not been any attempt to integrate these five strands into one course. Course-book writers design their syllabuses by focusing on certain aspects of the national syllabus. It is stated explicitly in the national syllabus that different institutions and different 'schools of thought' are encouraged to produce different kinds of course book according to the national syllabus (see CNESSTE 1989:14, also Li et al 1988:468). The relationship between the national and the course syllabus is a kind of mother-daughter one:

Figure 3.2: Relationship between the national and course syllabus



Although 'syllabus' consists of both content and methodology here, it is not really 'a plan which the teacher converts into a reality of classroom interaction' (Yalden 1983a:19) but primarily a set of guidelines for course book writers and teacher-trainers.

### 3.7 Summary

This chapter began with an overview of syllabus design, which covered (a) the distinction between the product-oriented and the process-oriented syllabus, (b) a working definition of 'syllabus', (c) the three types of syllabus (i.e., structural, situational, notional) which were distinguished in terms of the relationship between form, meaning, and use, and (d) selection and gradation of language content. Then Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses was examined in terms of notions and functions and it was concluded that the notional/functional syllabus is synthetic and product-oriented. After that, the complexity of form-meaning correspondences was discussed, and this was followed by a discussion on the relationship between syllabus and methodology and between syllabus and CLT respectively. Finally, the notion 'syllabus' was examined in relation to the Chinese ELT context.



## CHAPTER 4: GRAMMAR TEACHING

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters discussed, respectively, communicative competence, CLT, and syllabus design, all of them being concerned with the communicative approach to ELT. This chapter is devoted to the teaching of English grammar in particular. It will begin with a review of implicit and explicit teaching of grammar, which leads to the issue of whether grammar is a means or an end. Then different ways of grammar teaching will be reviewed. Finally, the organisation of a grammar lesson (the procedures of presenting grammar items) will be examined.

### 4.2 Implicit and Explicit

Since language is essentially rule-governed behaviour and communication involves the appropriate use of linguistic and pragmatic rules, it is generally accepted that the learning of a language includes the learning of its grammar. A knowledge of grammatical rules of the language is essential for the mastery of the language that the learner needs in his communicative encounters. Therefore, the issue is not whether students should learn grammatical rules but whether the rules should be taught implicitly or explicitly and which rules should be taught.

By implicit teaching of grammar I mean that students' attention is not directed to learning overt rules of grammar; they are not provided with explicit rules of grammar in their learning. They may be asked to do exercises or tasks where grammatical facts are hidden from them but where the rules are practised, usually unconsciously. They are not directed to the grammatical rules but to the performing of activities. It is hoped that students can subconsciously absorb the grammatical rules through such practice. Explicit teaching of grammar, by contrast, involves providing students with grammatical rules and necessary explanations. The rules are openly presented to students and they learn them consciously. Students may be asked to do drills which practise certain grammatical rules.

During the years when the traditional approach dominated the classroom, it was believed that explicit teaching of grammar was part of the whole learning process. However, some interlanguage studies and second language acquisition research have suggested that the conscious learning of grammatical rules does not automatically become acquisition of the rules, that explicit teaching of rules is not relevant to language acquisition (Krashen 1981:1), that explicit learning of the rules only provides a means of 'monitoring' output but does not lead to acquisition, and that learning is a conscious process while acquisition is largely an unconscious one (see e.g., Krashen 1981, 1982, 1983;

Krashen and Terrell 1983; Terrell 1977, 1982). According to Krashen, natural language learning seems to involve little more than the reception of comprehensible input. He formulates the Input Hypothesis as follows:


1. We acquire by understanding input language that contains structures a bit beyond our current level of competence.
2. Speech is a result of acquisition, not a cause.
3. If input is understood, and if there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided.

(Krashen 1983:259, my emphasis)

Followers of Krashen believe that since learning does not become acquisition there is no need to direct learners' attention to grammatical rules and that the activation of natural acquisition will be sufficient. Therefore, they are strongly against explicit teaching of grammar in the classroom. Prabhu claims that 'language-structure is best acquired when the learner's attention is on meaning' (Prabhu 1984:275). Although there are differences between Krashen's and Prabhu's approach to language learning, nevertheless, they are both based on an assumption which runs counter to explicit teaching of grammatical rules.

However, the view expressed by Krashen and Prabhu among others is not shared by McLaughlin (1978), Brumfit (1984a), Sampson (1984), Richards (1985a), Widdowson (1990), Celce-Murcia (1991), and others. McLaughlin (1978) argues that learning in a conscious way in the classroom should not be regarded as a peripheral aspect of language acquisition and that learned aspects of the

second or foreign language can become automatic processes in language use. Brumfit asserts that 'in spite of the implications of Krashen's position, there is no strong support for a rejection of formal teaching' (1984a:61). Similarly, Richards (1985a:43) questions the assumption that meaning-focused classrooms 'provide a better environment for second language acquisition than classrooms dominated by formal instruction' and he shares with Higgs and Clifford (1982) the view that the kind of teaching that rejects formal instruction may 'promote fossilisation and pidginisation'. Sampson (1984:26) also argues that 'the emphasis on so-called natural communication denies the efficacy of the classroom', which is an 'unnatural' setting and that a 'natural' classroom setting 'is usually an ineffectual environment because it does not maximise the possibility for learning to take place'. Similarly, Widdowson states that we cannot make classroom settings provide conditions for natural learning 'nor does it make any sense to try' (Widdowson 1990:162). He argues that to try to replicate natural learning conditions in the classroom is to deny the whole purpose of language education, which is 'to contrive economical and more effective means for language learning than is provided by natural exposure and experience' (Widdowson op. cit.:164). He believes that classroom learning is different from natural language use because the latter not only 'deflects attention from language itself' but also 'presupposes a knowledge of the



language system as a basic resource which learners have, by definition, not yet acquired' (Widdowson loc. cit.).

Balcom (1985) questions the rejection of teaching explicit grammar by saying that even if we follow Krashen's framework the teaching of grammar is necessary because it can (a) make input more comprehensible (i.e., enable learners to organise the language they are exposed to), (b) help learners to segment the input into more efficient units of comprehension, and (c) confirm or disconfirm learners' hypotheses about the grammatical rules. Rutherford (1987) calls for raising learners' consciousness about processes of 'grammaticisation'.

Tarone and Yule (1989:5-8), following Schumann (1983), argue that whether we should focus on formal grammatical instruction depends on factors such as the types of learners, their learning experiences, and the learning situations (cf. Carroll 1971; Allen 1983). What is more important is what kind of teaching/learning is more appropriate to what kind of learners and in what kind of learning situations.

The teaching of English in the Chinese context requires explicit teaching of grammar. In the national English syllabus (CNESTE 1989), for example, it is explicitly stated that there is a separate compulsory grammar (morphology and syntax) course for general English majors in their second year at the university and that there is also an optional grammar (morphology and syntax) course especially for students at normal

universities and colleges in the third year of their four-year programme of studies (Li et al 1988:429-30, also see Section 5.6.2.2). Besides, grammar is also treated in other courses, some of which (e.g., the comprehensive English course) are rather 'grammar-directed'. It is not an exaggeration to say that neither Chinese educationalists nor classroom teachers will deny the importance of grammar and explicit grammar teaching in learning English in China. I believe that even non-Chinese applied linguists familiar with the teaching of English in China will agree that explicit teaching of grammar is unlikely to be abandoned (see discussion in Section 5.4).

#### 4.3 Means and End

The teaching of grammar can be seen either as a means to an end or as an end in itself. The teaching of grammar for its own sake is usually said to be a feature of the grammar-translation method (Alexander 1988b:59). In its extreme form this method aims at teaching about the language rather than teaching language for communication. Therefore, it is not surprising that this method has been severely condemned. Many of the criticisms that are levelled against the traditional approach and explicit teaching of grammar are actually directed at the teaching-about-language approach.

There is now general agreement that grammar is a means to a communicative end, not an end in itself

(Brumfit 1981c:91, Gu 1984:10, Richards 1985a:157, Ur 1988:5, Alexander 1988b:59, Celce-Murcia 1991:466). As Carroll writes:

the use of a language is the objective, and the mastery of the formal patterns, or usage of that language is a means to achieve this objective.

(Carroll 1980:7)

Celce-Murcia (1991:466; cf. Alexander 1988b:59, cited in Section 2.8) points out that the recognition of grammar as a tool or resource in communication rather than as an end in itself is a result of the communicative revolution. Widdowson (1987a, 1990), sees that 'the emphasis on structures was associated with the process of learning, as the means towards an end' (Widdowson 1990:117) and that the teaching of structures is in accordance with the 'investment' principle.

#### 4.4 Ways of Teaching Grammar

Allen (1974) observes that 'there are three common strategies for providing students with a knowledge of the underlying rules' (1974:84). These three strategies are:

(1) The situational method (i.e., demonstration in context), which attempts to help students to master the grammatical rules inductively without needing to be conscious of the rules, which provides students with ample opportunities for spontaneous oral assimilation, and which focuses on helping students discover the rules without spending a lot of time 'talking about grammar'.



(2) The audiolingual method (i.e., pattern practice based on sentence frames), which aims to help students to develop a new set of habits and which focuses on pattern practice.

(3) The grammatical explanation method (i.e., the overt presentation of abstract grammatical rules), which attempts to provide students with a conscious knowledge of grammatical rules and which offers explicit statements of the rules and plenty of practice in the form of drills and dialogues.

Allen then argues that 'none of these methods is complete in itself' (1974:91) and suggests 'the multiple line of approach', saying that successful language teaching depends on a combination of different strategies and that the right combination is to be found by the teacher who knows the teaching context (cf. Allen 1987:51; Tarone and Yule 1989:5-8; Richards 1990:35).

Alexander (1988b:59), on the other hand, claims that 'there is only one method for teaching grammar and ... it is called explanation.' He, like Allen (1974:91), calls for the teacher to find the appropriate way to teach grammar:

Explanation is always the method: it is up to the teacher to decide what kind of explanation is most suitable in any given circumstances. (Alexander 1988b:59)

While I would agree with Alexander on the point that appropriate teaching strategy should be chosen with regard to the given teaching context, I would argue that

explanation is only one of the many ways of teaching grammar, rather than the only way. The strategy Alexander is advocating is rather teaching-centred, which leaves no alternatives for the combinations or variations of other teaching strategies and techniques.

#### 4.5 The Organisation of a Grammar Lesson

I have so far discussed the arguments for and against explicit teaching of grammatical rules, and some strategies for grammar teaching. In this section, I would like to discuss practical issues and survey the phases of presenting a grammar item in the classroom. The generalisation about the appropriate ways to teach grammar depends on factors such as aims and objectives, focus on knowledge or skills, learners' needs and wishes, their learning experiences, and social and cultural background. Different kinds of teaching procedure and technique are suitable for different language classroom settings.

Ur (1988:6-7) suggests four stages for the teaching of grammar: (a) presentation, (b) isolation and explanation, (c) practice, (d) test. Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988:27-8) propose similar procedures: (a) presentation, (b) focused practice, (c) communicative practice, (d) teacher feedback and correction. These two procedures have similarities, as shown in Figure 4.1 below:

Figure 4.1: The phases of presenting grammar items

phase approach	Presen- tation	Focused practice	Free practice	Expla- nation	Feedback
Ur	v	v	v	v	test
Celce-Murcia & Hilles	v	v	v		v & correction

It is both Ur's (1988) and Celce-Murcia and Hilles' (1988) aim to help learners to master the language for communication. However, the order of the phases they suggest is that presentation comes first and is then followed by focused practice, which is in turn followed by free practice and feedback.

Brumfit (1978/1980b, 1979a) points out that the traditional model of language teaching 'presented new items, in a relatively isolated form, and then practised them in increasingly contextualised situations' (1978/1980b:121) (see Figure 4.2) and states that a communicative model may be the reversal of the traditional procedure, as outlined in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.2: The traditional procedure  
(from Brumfit 1979a:183)

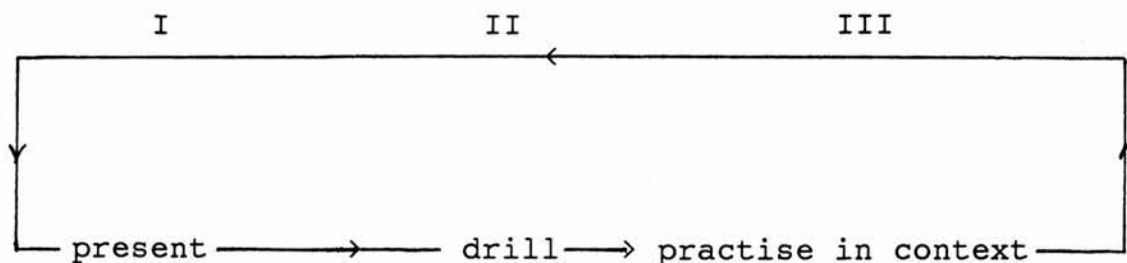
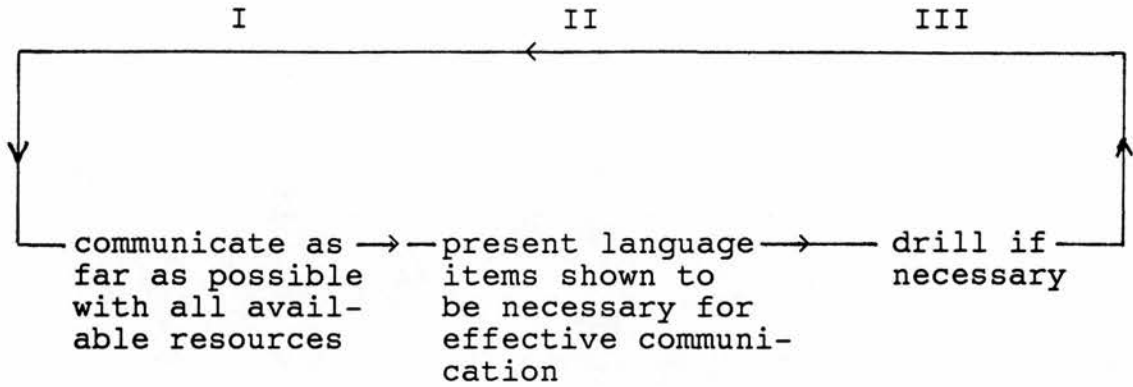


Figure 4.3: The communicative procedure  
(from Brumfit loc.cit.)



Johnson (1982:192-200) calls the communicative procedure (i.e., Figure 4.3) the 'deep end strategy' and argues for its advantages in CLT. He points out that one of the most important features of this strategy is that it helps learners to develop 'risk-taking' skills (Johnson 1982, 1988a).

Clearly, the procedures adopted by both Ur and Celce-Murcia and Hilles resemble the traditional model more than the communicative model.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) suggest steps in presenting items of grammar in the classroom, claiming that their approach is functional/notional rather than structural or audiolingual. The different steps in presenting items of grammar proposed are:

1. Motivate the teaching of structures by showing how they are needed in real-life communication....
2. State the aim of the lesson.
3. Review the familiar items ... in the target language that will be needed to introduce, explain, or practice the new item.
4. Use the new structure ... in a brief utterance...
5. Model the utterance several times.
6. Engage in full class, half-class, group and individual repetition of the utterance.
7. Give several additional sentences in which the structure is used. Class and groups will repeat after

you.

8. Write two of the sentences on the blackboard. Underline the new structure and (where relevant) use curved arrows to the other words in the utterance to which the structure is related.

9. Point to the underlined structure (and the arrows) as you ask questions which will guide learners to discover the sounds, the written form, the position in the sentence, and the grammatical function of the new structure....

10. Help students ... to verbalise the important features of the structure....

11. Engage the students in varied guided oral practice.

12. Require them to consciously select the new grammatical items from contrasting ones they had learned in the past.

13. Help them to use the structure with communicative expressions and familiar (or new) notions.

14. Where feasible, do a translation exercise.

(Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:122-3)

If these 14 steps are categorised, they fall into five groups; that is, the 14 steps make up five stages:

(1) Warm-up: Steps 1-3

(2) Presentation: Steps 4-5

(3) Focused practice: Steps 6-12

(4) Free practice: Step 13

(5) Follow-up: Step 14

The procedures suggested here are more traditional (see Figure 4.2) than communicative; they are more or less the same as those proposed by Ur or Celce-Murcia and Hilles. This strategy, like the one adopted by Ur (1988) or Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988), is far from being totally communicative. The only differences between Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) and Ur (1988) or Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) are that the former adds the warm-up and follow-up element, which I think is not so powerful as to make the model communicative, and that the latter

contains explicit feedback. Is it because Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983), Ur's (1988), and Celce-Murcia and Hilles' (1988) procedures are not communicative or is it because the teaching of grammar is different from the teaching of, say, listening, or speaking? Although the communicative procedure suggested by Brumfit (1978/1980b, 1979a) could be applied to the teaching of grammar items it is more efficient and effective to adopt less communicative procedures because in teaching grammar it is perhaps best to deal with problems of form before students do communicative work (cf. Swan 1985:80). Therefore, it can be argued that grammar teaching procedures cannot be totally communicative.

#### 4.6 Summary

This chapter began with arguments for the explicit teaching of grammar and took it for granted that grammar is a means to a communicative end rather than an end in itself. Then different ways of teaching grammar were reviewed. Finally, different procedures for the practical teaching of a grammar item were examined and it was argued that the teaching of grammar is different from that of listening, or speaking; and the conclusion was that grammar teaching could not be totally communicative.

Part Two:

ELT IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT



## CHAPTER 5: TEFL IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT

### 5.1 Introduction

The People's Republic of China has a population of more than one billion people and has the largest number of English learners in the world (Li 1984b). ELT in the Chinese context has characteristics which are not shared by other countries. For example, as Gui (1986:1) observes, ELT in China is confined to classroom teaching and the exposure to the target language in use in communication is rare. Most Chinese ELT teachers have never had a chance to receive training in an English-speaking country. On the other hand, ELT is determined by the country's political policies; and learners' needs are subordinate to the country's needs. Besides, rather than choosing jobs for themselves, graduates are usually assigned jobs according to the country's needs and plans.

This chapter will review the teaching and learning of EFL in China. It will begin with a brief history of TEFL in China and then describe the national syllabus for English majors. Then it will report on literature on (a) teaching methods/approaches and the practice of classroom teaching popular in China, and (b) students' general learning styles (study habits). After that, it will examine the teaching of English grammar in the Chinese classroom. This will be followed by a discussion of CLT in general and the CECL project in particular in China.

Finally, it will look at the current ELT situation in China and argue for a Chinese approach to CLT.

## 5.2 A Brief History of TEFL in China

In China, formal and systematic TEFL dates back to 1862 (Wang 1981:76, Tang 1984:38, Li et al 1988:1, 12), although informal and unsystematic TEFL began in the early 1800s (Li et al op. cit.:1-11). The history of TEFL can be divided into five periods (cf. Wang 1981, Tang 1984, Li et al 1988):

- (1) Prior to liberation (1862-1949)
- (2) The 'Russian dominance' (1949-1957)
- (3) The first 'renaissance' (1958-1966)
- (4) The Cultural Revolution (1966-1977)
- (5) The second 'renaissance' (1977- )

During the early part of the first period of TEFL in China, generally speaking, the focus was on reading comprehension and translation and the study of grammar. The medium of instruction was Chinese, and the teaching method was grammar-translation. Grammar was the core of ELT and 'grammatical rules were illustrated with examples, and these rules were to be memorised and recited by the learner' (Wang 1981:78). The study of grammar was regarded as both the aim and the means of learning English. Learning English meant learning its grammar. Later, when the direct method was introduced to China around 1922 (Li et al 1988:210), the focus was on oral practice and the medium of instruction became

English. Great emphasis was put on imitation, pattern drills, recitation, and listening comprehension. Students who were taught under the grammar-translation method tended to be incompetent in speaking and listening, whereas those trained with the direct method tended to be poor in reading and writing.

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 brought drastic changes in foreign language teaching. During this period, China's educational relations were largely limited to socialist countries such as the USSR (Huang 1987:62). As a result, Russian was taught everywhere in China; English was, to a large extent, rejected and was only taught in a few schools and universities. At that time many of the teachers of English had to receive training in Russian in order to become teachers of the Russian language. Although the teaching of English then was influenced by the American structural approach, the 'three-centred' (classroom-centred, teacher-centred, and textbook-centred) practice imported from the Russian educational system and the 'spoonfeeding' strategy (Tang 1984:41) were dominant in English language teaching, as China then had good relations with the then USSR.

During the third period (1958-1966) of TEFL in China, English reappeared in the classroom everywhere. More class hours were allocated to English teaching and the subject became a requirement for the entrance examination for colleges and universities (Tang op.

cit.:43). The Russian-based teaching materials and methods and practices were then challenged. The audio-lingual method was adopted in many classrooms. Textbooks were written in line with the all-round development of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goals, the objectives, and the teaching methods, strategies and techniques were among the topics discussed everywhere in the educational field; teachers were enthusiastic and the situation was encouraging when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966.

Over the next decade English was rejected for the second time in the history of language teaching in China. Because of the political movement, foreign textbooks and journals were criticised and banned. Only after 1970 did some schools and universities begin to offer English courses again. But the textbooks were full of political slogans and 'Chairman Mao's Quotations', and revolutionary themes. Teachers never seemed to care which teaching method was used because of the content and the way that teaching materials were compiled. At that time, because of the political situation, there were many short-comings in ELT, for example: poor leadership in educational management, lack of funds and teaching facilities, the low social status of teachers, and the failure to put graduates to good use (e.g., many graduates were assigned jobs which did not require the knowledge and skills they had learned in the university).

Luckily, the gloomy situation was changed in 1977

with the downfall of the 'gang of four'. Since then, English has become an important subject in the curriculum and has received more attention than ever. More and more specialists in linguistics, applied linguistics and ELT, and teachers of English from English-speaking countries have been to China to train teachers, and to help design language courses and write teaching materials. New theories and teaching methods/approaches have been introduced, adopted and/or adapted. Chinese teachers and students of English have been sent in increasing numbers to English-speaking countries to receive further training. Also, more and more foreign books and journals have been imported.

### 5.3 The National Syllabus for English Majors

As the proposed grammar course is derived from China's National English Syllabus for Stage-one Tertiary Education (CNESSTE), the following sections will look at the aim, teaching contents, requirements, and teaching principles laid down in CNESSTE.

#### 5.3.1 CNESSTE: A Brief Introduction

CNESSTE is a national syllabus designed for the first two years of the four-year English degree course at tertiary level, referred to earlier as Stage-one Education <sup>1</sup>. Before this stage, students 'must have mastered the basic knowledge of English phonetics and

grammar, and have a vocabulary of 2,000 words, and have received basic training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing' (CNESSTE 1989:7, my translation).

Courses and class hours suggested in CNESSTE (1989:15) are as follows:

Table 5.1 Courses and class hours in CNESSTE  
(my translation)

course hour weekly grade/term	Comp Engl	R	L&S	W	Pho	Gra	Others
1 / 1	6-8	2	3-4		1		Viewing; Introduc- tion to Britain & America; European cultures
1 / 2	6-8	2	3-4		1		
2 / 1	6	2-3	2	1-2		1-2	
2 / 2	6	2-3	2	1-2		1	

Key: Comp Engl = Comprehensive English; R = Reading;  
W = Writing; L & S = Listening and Speaking;  
Pho = Phonetics; Gra = Grammar.

As the class hours are only suggested (CNESSTE 1989:17) and as most of the teaching is confined to the classroom in the Chinese ELT context (see Sections 5.4 and 5.5 below), the maximum number of hours is usually preferred or there are more class hours spent than the number suggested in CNESSTE. At GIFL, for example, there are usually seven to eight hours allocated every week for the 'Comprehensive English' <sup>2</sup> course and there are two hours every week in both terms <sup>3</sup> in Grade Two for the Grammar Course.

### 5.3.2 The Aim

It is stated explicitly that the task and aim of Stage-one Education is 'to teach the students a knowledge of basic English and the overall basic skills, to develop their actual language-performance abilities, good learning habits and styles, and logical reasoning and independent working abilities, to enrich their knowledge of societies and cultures, to develop their awareness of cultural differences, and to help them lay a solid foundation for Stage-two Education' (CNESSTE 1989:7, my translation).

### 5.3.3 Contents and Requirements

CNESSTE states that students at this stage are to be taught a basic knowledge of phonetics and grammar, and a basic vocabulary and by the end of this stage should have mastered them and at the same time be able to listen, speak, read, and write correctly and fluently in communication. There are specific requirements for different teaching contents (i.e., phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, functions and notions, communication skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing). As the present study is mainly concerned with a grammar course, only the requirements for grammar are listed below:<sup>4</sup>

(1) At the beginning of the first year (i.e., the entrance requirements), students should 'have mastered the inflectional forms of the verb, the comparisons of the degrees of the adjective and the adverb, the



structures of the simple sentence (including the interrogative sentence and the imperative sentence), and other elementary grammatical items'.

(2) By the end of the first year, students should 'have mastered firmly the grammatical knowledge they have learned and be able to put it into practice'. They should have 'clear [grammatical] concepts and [be able to use] the forms correctly'.

(3) By the end of this stage (i.e., by the end of the second year), students should 'have a systematic mastery of basic English grammar, be clear about the [grammatical] concepts, and be able to use the forms correctly'.

(all quotations from CNESSTE 1989:9, my translation)

#### 5.3.4 Teaching Principles

There are altogether nine 'teaching principles' laid down in CNESSTE (1989:12-14, my translation):

1. Correctly handle the relationship between English learning and education in ideology. In order to become special personnel for the construction of socialist modernisation, students must receive not only systematic training in basic English knowledge and skills, but also education in ideology and moral integrity.

2. Correctly handle the relationship between linguistic knowledge and language performance. The mastery of linguistic knowledge (i.e., phonetics,

grammar, and vocabulary) and the development of language performance are complementary. In an unnatural language environment (i.e., classroom setting), it is necessary to provide students with plenty of opportunity to put their knowledge and skills into practice. Therefore, classroom teaching should adhere to precise lectures/explanations and ample practice, and focus on practice. At the same time, students should be provided with opportunities to use language in communication.

3. Focus on training students in their abilities to use English in communication. The aim of foreign language teaching is to train students to acquire communicative competence. Although grammatical competence is the basis of communicative competence, the mastery of the former does not mean the mastery of the latter. Communicative competence is acquired not when linguistic competence is acquired, but after systematic training and repeated practice. The objective of Stage-one Education is to train students not only in grammatical competence but also communicative competence.

4. Handle well the relationship between accuracy and fluency in language learning. Accuracy (i.e., the mastery of linguistic knowledge and the correct use of the forms) and fluency (i.e., effective and efficient use of the language) must be integrated; accuracy is the basis of fluency. The focus must be on fluency based on accuracy.

5 Correctly handle the relationships between

listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are complementary. At different stages of the teaching process and in different courses, certain skill(s) can be focused on. However, what teachers must be concerned with is the overall improvement and development of students' grammatical competence.

6. Correctly handle the relationship between mother tongue and the foreign language. From the beginning of Stage-one Education, classroom teaching must be conducted in English so as to develop students' 'language sense' and to provide them with a foreign language environment. However, this does not mean the rejection of the effective use of the mother tongue. Chinese can be used, if necessary, in the explanation of grammatical and lexical items and contrastive analysis. Certain translation exercises are also encouraged.

7. Choose the teaching method(s) according to given circumstances. All teaching methods have their own historical and social backgrounds. The adoption of the teaching method(s) must be based on the Chinese ELT context (e.g., learners' needs and their language proficiency, teaching conditions, teachers' abilities). No matter what method is adopted, it must be beneficial to students' learning initiative and to the development of their independent working abilities.

8. Make full use of modern teaching aids. Recordings, videos, TV programmes, films, and computers are modern teaching aids beneficial to language learning.

They should be made full use of and popularised.

9. Actively organise outside-classroom learning activities. In order to help students to master a foreign language, other opportunities must be provided in addition to classroom teaching so that students can use the foreign language in communication. Therefore, activities such as English evenings, speech-competitions (public speaking), and interactions between students and foreigners must be actively organised.

These nine principles are only general guidelines and are intended to provide the basis for the implementation of the syllabus (and methodology). Nevertheless, most of them seem to be applicable to the design, the implementation, and the evaluation of the proposed grammar course, which will be discussed later (see Chapters 7, 8, and 9). Having looked at some aspects of CNESSTE, I now turn to the review of teaching methods and students' learning styles.

#### 5.4 Teaching Methods and Learning Styles

In this section, teaching methods and learning styles will be looked at with regard to the Chinese tradition and the ELT context. It is hoped that this discussion will reveal the general educational practices in China.

#### 5.4.1 Chinese Traditions and Language Teaching and Learning

As was pointed out in Section 5.2, the Russian methodological principles of 'classroom-centredness', 'teacher-centredness', and 'textbook-centredness' were once dominant in the ELT context in China. As it is clear that these principles are still in practice in ELT in China, it may be argued that it is not because the Russian principles are powerful but because these principles are also in accordance with the neo-Confucian tradition. Although Confucius (551-479BC) lived more than 2,000 years ago, Confucianism as a way of thinking is still influential in many aspects of Chinese life, especially in education (Ting 1987:49-50). The emphasis on grammatical accuracy, teacher-centredness, textbook-centredness is regarded as a result of the influence of the neo-Confucian tradition (Ting op. cit.:53).

In Imperial China, scholars had to spend years memorising the Classics such as 'Four Books and Five Works' which were believed to contain the embodiment of the highest value and the truth about virtuous behaviour. These classics were regarded as a model for scholars who wanted to know the ways and means to virtuous and correct behaviour and to become the elite. In order to internalise these texts, people had to memorise. It was widely believed that quotations from texts memorised mechanically without comprehension would come to appropriate use when needed later. Therefore, young

children were and still are taught to memorise incomprehensible texts in China. School boys and girls were and are also required to memorise characters, texts, and the proper sequencing of strokes and the sound of the character (Scovel 1983:106). Besides, 'books are thought of as an embodiment of knowledge, wisdom and truth' (Maley 1983/1986:103). For many Chinese teachers and students,

Knowledge is 'in' the book and can be taken out and put inside the students' heads. Hence the reverence with which books are treated, the value they are assigned, and the wish to learn by heart what they contain. (Maley 1983/1986:103)

Clearly, the textbook-centredness is a product of this tradition.

Another aspect of the neo-Confucian tradition is that the teacher is a model for the learner. Young children were and still are taught to take their teachers as models and teachers were/are required to serve as models. Most young school children believe almost everything their teachers say. Even many university students learn some subjects by relying on their teachers who are believed to have the correct ideas and answers. The fact that Chinese students, no matter how advanced they are, do not like to question their teachers in class shows their belief that the teacher is a model to be followed, not to be questioned, interrupted or challenged. It is easily noticeable that Chinese students, no matter in which country they are studying,

like to be given lectures and take notes in class rather than to take an active part in discussion in class. Teacher-centredness is a product of this tradition.

Grammatical accuracy is another Chinese tradition, which is not only related to the neo-Confucian tradition but also a product of Yan Fu's (1854-1921) theories of accuracy, expressiveness and gracefulness in the art of translation, which are still used by many in China as the yardsticks for evaluating the finished product of the translation (i.e., the Chinese version) (Wang 1981:77). Many Chinese teachers of English are 'so attentive to accuracy that they immediately correct every pronunciation or grammatical mistake that students make in class' (Scovel op. cit.:105).

As Chinese learners like the concept of a model (i.e., teacher-as-model and text-as-model) (Sampson 1984), teaching methods/strategies reflect this preference. The teacher plans everything that is to happen in class beforehand, e.g., writing down what he will say and do in class and prescribing the students' activities in class according to the 'teaching plan' (see Section 5.5 below); students, on the other hand, listen to what the teacher says and take notes and do what they are told to. They often feel comfortable with memorisation-based strategies/techniques (Malcolm and Malcolm 1988:3). As is observed by Malcolm and Malcolm (loc. cit.), an undergraduate student of English in a Chinese university, in a campus radio broadcast,



'counselled fellow-students as follows: Recite. You should always choose some good texts or conversation to recite. ... Some people are afraid recitation is too hard a job for them. But if you have nothing stored in your mind ... [then] when you speak you cannot find words and have nothing to say'. It is said that even today the most widely accepted view of learning in China is that it is memory-based (Maley 1983/1986:104, Scovel 1983:106, Brumfit 1988b:164). It is also observed that even university students continue to memorise not only lessons of English but also other lectures such as animal husbandry (Scovel loc. cit.). For the students, the teacher and the textbook have the knowledge they need; therefore 'in order to acquire it, it is sufficient for the students to commit it to memory' (Maley loc. cit.). That is why the 'empty-/full-vessel' model of teaching is still popular in China (Allen and Spada 1982:191).

#### 5.4.2 The Chinese ELT Context and Language Teaching and Learning

Although the teaching and learning of English in China is traditional with a focus on classroom-centredness, teacher-centredness, textbook-centredness, and grammar-centredness (Tang 1984:41; Ting 1987:53), it is an undeniable fact that many Chinese have a good command of English after a few years studies within China. It is observed that in the present Chinese ELT context 'almost any method [of language teaching] would

work' (Maley 1984a:46), because Chinese students are generally highly motivated. Nida (1984, cited in Ting op. cit.:48) observes that 'an English major who has only studied within China... often has a better command of the language than the average American college graduate has of a foreign language which he or she has majored in and studied only in America'. This, therefore, forces us to find out the reasons for the present practices in China.

#### 5.4.2.1 Why classroom-centred?

As we saw in Section 5.1 above, the teaching and learning of English in China is confined to classroom teaching and the exposure to the target language in use in communication is rare. Classroom is the setting where the language is taught, practised, and learned. Although there are English programmes on TV and the radio, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in China the classroom is the major, if not the only, setting for English language teaching and learning to take place.

#### 5.4.2.2 Why teacher-centred?

There are at least three reasons for the choice of teacher-centredness in the Chinese ELT context. Firstly, both teachers and students are familiar and thus are seemingly happy with this practice, as it is the way they were taught at school. Secondly, it offers the teacher the security of being a teacher. That is, if nothing or little is planned beforehand, the teacher who does not

have native-speaker fluency in terms of grammatical competence and sociocultural appropriacy may get into difficulties if questioned, interrupted or challenged during class. On the other hand, students may not learn what they expect and are expected to learn if teaching is not based on a plan. For incompetent teachers, this practice is essential. Thirdly, as students are anxious to acquire knowledge from the teacher, it is often the case that the more the teacher gives the better.

#### 5.4.2.3 Why textbook-centred?

Apart from the neo-Confucian tradition, textbook-centredness has an important role to play. As Sampson (1984:29) concludes, 'the text, the written word, has a value and has consequences in China far beyond anything North Americans can imagine in their own mercantile cultures'. There are at least three reasons for this practice:

(1) It gives the teacher confidence and the security in class. When he has something to follow, he can make preparations and plan his lessons beforehand.

(2) It also gives students confidence in the learning process. After each lesson learners can see how much they have been taught (though not necessarily mastered), which gives them a sense of success and satisfaction.

(3) As 'review' is an important procedure in the learning process for Chinese students (cf. Maley

1984a:46), this practice provides students with the opportunity to review what has been taught.

#### 5.4.2.4 Why grammar-centred?

The importance of grammar has been discussed in many places so far (e.g., Chapter 4). Although I do not feel that grammar should be the core of language teaching, I understand why grammar-centredness is still favoured by some teachers. One obvious reason for this practice is that it makes evaluation easy. A related reason is that grammar-centred teaching is easy for both the teacher and the students to follow. Grammar-centredness, like teacher-centredness and textbook-centredness, provides the teacher with the security of being a teacher. Like textbook-centredness, it helps make students confident in what they have learned.

#### 5.4.2.5 Why memorisation?

Many non-Chinese may think it ridiculous for Chinese students to memorise texts, rules, and even lectures, although they themselves, too, memorise things in one way or another. However, as Sampson argues,

From the Chinese perspective, memorisation is far from being an easy cop-out or a release from thinking. To know a text by memory first of all means that the text is important to the learner. To be able to recapitulate the text by memory means that the learner can play it in his mind at will.

(Sampson 1984:29)

She goes on to say that 'to respond to memorisation by Chinese students with such derision and scorn is ... not a mark of scientific thinking'. Indeed, it is still believed that memorisation of grammatical rules, patterns of usage and word collocations will lead to proper and correct English (Scovel 1983:107). As Brumfit (1988b:164) claims, rote learning is a procedure 'which has been used most effectively in language learning' in China.

#### 5.4.3 Summary

I have so far discussed the Chinese traditions and their influences on language teaching and learning in the Chinese ELT context. I have also examined the reasons for adopting the 'four centrednesses': classroom-centredness, teacher-centredness, textbook-centredness and grammar-centredness and for memory-based learning. It is important that when certain teaching strategies and learning styles are criticised or recommended, the teaching context where the strategies and styles are in use must be taken into account.

### 5.5 The Practice of Classroom Teaching

In this section, the popular practice of classroom teaching in China's ELT context will be reviewed. The practice can be seen as consisting of two steps: (a) preparation, and (b) implementation.

### 5.5.1 Preparation

Great importance is attached to preparation before classroom teaching takes place. Since teachers are not free to teach whatever they want to in the classroom (Scovel 1983:108), they have to follow the textbook and the teaching plan. If a teacher is responsible for a class following a course which involves other classes and other teachers, he usually discusses his teaching programmes with his colleagues regularly. That is, teachers who teach the same course to different classes generally prepare their lessons collectively. This collective preparation takes different forms. One way is for teachers to take turns in the preparation of one unit/lesson. Before the unit/lesson is taught, the teachers have a meeting where the 'responsible' teacher, who has prepared the lesson carefully, tells others the teaching plan of the unit/lesson (e.g. sociocultural information on the writer and/or the text(s), difficult linguistic points, supplementary exercises, keys to the exercises if they are not in the teacher's handbook, etc.). Of course, other teachers may make suggestions and adaptations at the meeting.

This practice has many advantages. For example, new and inexperienced teachers can learn from the older ones; teachers can save a lot of time preparing the lessons; teachers are likely to understand the teaching materials and procedures better after the group discussion so that the lesson will be better taught. Besides, the regular

meetings will ensure that all classes taking the same course are at the same pace and are offered more or less the same thing. As for the students, this regular meeting will make them feel that what they have been taught is the same as in other classes, which will prevent them from hoping to choose teachers for their classes.

If only one teacher is responsible for a course (as is the case with the grammar course in some universities), he must also prepare his classes beforehand. This not only ensures that he will have enough to say and do in class if he follows the teaching plan, but also helps him to conduct the class well. As was observed by Allen and Spada (1982:191), if a teacher commits an error or admits to not knowing something, it is often assumed that he has not prepared the lessons well enough and therefore has not fulfilled his 'duty' as a teacher. In order to be a good teacher, one has to prepare one's lesson carefully and well, for a good teacher is usually considered to be the one who has all the answers to any questions/problems/exercises at all times (Allen and Spada loc. cit.).

#### 5.5.2 Implementation

For a classroom teacher, the next important stage after the preparation of his teaching, is the implementation in the classroom. Careful preparation of the lesson is only half the battle: he must be able to



control the class when he is giving the lesson. Usually, the teacher stands on a raised platform with a desk at the front of the class on which he puts his teaching plans/notes and textbook, with the students seated in rows facing him. He normally does not step down from the platform. If he is teaching the 'Comprehensive English' course, he usually goes over any new words and expressions, and structures and provides background knowledge/information on the author/text before working on the text/passage itself. The text/passage is often treated by using the 'explication de texte' method (Allen and Spada 1982:191; Maley 1983/1986:103-4). The focus of the lesson is normally on the code, not on the means for communication. The language of the text/passage is definitely more important than the communication value of the text/ passage. The usual teaching procedure of a lesson, as described by Jia (1989:31), is: (teacher and students) review the previous lesson --> (teacher) begin(s) the new lesson --> (students) digest and consolidate (what has been taught) --> (teacher) give(s) homework (my interpretation and translation).

If the teacher is teaching the grammar course, he usually lectures on the form and usage (or 'use' in the sense of Alexander 1988a:59, e.g., 'I haven't seen him since six months' is an example of the incorrect use of the preposition, i.e., in the sense of use to create a correct form) of the new structure. This may be followed by some teacher and whole-class questions and answers on

particular grammar points. It is assumed that the task for teachers of such courses is to give knowledge to students rather than help them to apply the knowledge to use. The teaching of grammar will be discussed in detail in Section 5.6 below.

### 5.5.3 Conclusion

As Chinese teachers of English do not have native-speaker fluency and accuracy in the target language and as the Chinese way of distinguishing good teachers from poor ones often rests on whether they know all the answers to students' questions or how many errors they make in their teaching performance, the preparation stage of the teaching practice is crucial. Besides, the teacher-centredness and the textbook-centredness are often regarded as means to successful teaching.

It should be made clear that the above description of the practice of classroom teaching is true only of the traditional classroom. In a communicative classroom, the picture is quite different; I shall return to this in Section 5.8 below).

## 5.6: The Teaching of English Grammar in China

### 5.6.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous section was on ELT in China in general; this section will look at the teaching and learning of English grammar in the Chinese classroom

in particular. It will begin with the aim and objectives, the status of grammar teaching in the whole ELT enterprise, the teaching content and methodology, and the course book. Then it will go on to describe classroom grammar teaching, based on the results of classroom observations, which will be followed by discussion of the implications for the design and implementation of the proposed grammar course.

### 5.6.2 An Overview

In this overview, the following five issues will be discussed: (a) the aims and objectives of grammar teaching, (b) the status of the grammar course, (c) the teaching content, (d) classroom teaching strategy, and (e) the course book. Finally two grammar books will be reviewed.

#### 5.6.2.1 Aims and objectives

In the following discussion I shall adopt Widdowson's distinction between aims and objectives: objectives are 'the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of that course and in principle measurable by some assessment device at the end of the course' (Widdowson 1983:6-7) whereas aims refer to 'the purpose to which learning will be put after the end of the course' (op. cit.:7).

There is no clearly-stated aim for the grammar course in CNESSTE (1989), although there are requirements

of grammar for students during their studies at the university (see Section 5.3.3 above). It seems that the aim of Stage-one Education is also the aim of the grammar course, and the objectives of the grammar course are related to the requirements of grammar stated in CNESSTE. Since there is no national set textbook for the grammar course nor set objectives of the course, the objectives of the grammar course are usually directed to meet the requirements of grammar laid out in CNESSTE (1989:9): By the end of their second year at the university, students should 'have a systematic mastery of basic English grammar, be clear about the [grammatical] concepts, and be able to use the forms correctly' (my translation). The lack of well-defined objectives for the grammar course leads to problems concerned with the course book, teaching strategies/techniques, the relationship between rules, terms, concepts, and the use of the rules. Most institutions use reference books as course books (Liu, Wu and Yu 1990, Huang 1991b, 1992) and the teaching strategy/technique is usually grammatical explanation (deductive learning) and thus teacher-centred (see Section 5.6.3.4 below). Most of the teachers put the emphasis of the course on grammatical concepts and terms rather than on the use of the rules; therefore the teaching of grammar is teaching grammar for its own sake. Recently, Gu (1984:10) argued that the main purpose of grammar teaching should be 'to improve students' ability in using language' rather than merely 'to impart

grammatical knowledge to them' (my translation).

#### 5.6.2.2 Status

As was pointed out earlier (Section 4.2, and Section 5.3.1 above), explicit teaching of grammar is desirable in the Chinese ELT context. According to the national English syllabus there is a compulsory grammar course for university students: 72 hours for second-year students in foreign languages institutes/universities, 36 hours for second-year students in comprehensive universities, and 72 hours for second-/third year students in normal universities/colleges (i.e., 36 hours in term two of the second year and 36 hours in term one of the third year). There is also an optional grammar course (72 hours) for students in normal universities and colleges in their third year at the university (Li et al 1988:431-3).

In the present Chinese ELT context, grammar is treated not only in the grammar course but also in courses such as Comprehensive English, writing, and translation. It should be made clear that the sub-syllabus for grammar in CNESSTE (1989) is expected to be dealt with in all the courses (see Section 5.3.1), although primarily in the Comprehensive English course and the grammar course. The issue that is of interest to Chinese teachers of English, as Gu (1984:10) observes, is not whether grammar should be taught but what grammar is to be taught and how it should be taught.

### 5.6.2.3 Teaching content

In CNESSTE (1989:33-54) the grammar items to be covered during Stage-one Education are listed and exemplified. However, if we look at the grammar items in the English Syllabus for China's Full-time Secondary Education (ESCFSE 1986, see Appendix 2), we can see that almost all the grammar items in CNESSTE (1989, see Appendix 1) have already been dealt with in the secondary school. I would therefore argue that the grammar course in Stage-one Education in fact serves a remedial purpose.<sup>5</sup> In other words, students of the grammar course at the university are not expected to learn much 'new knowledge' but to review and consolidate what they learned before entering the university.

### 5.6.2.4 Classroom teaching strategy

In Section 4.4, different ways/strategies of teaching grammar were reviewed. As will be seen from the findings of classroom observations (see Section 5.6.3.4 below), the most common strategy in grammar teaching is grammar explanation, focusing on conscious knowledge of grammatical rules and explicit statements of the rules.

### 5.6.2.5 The course book

In the Chinese ELT context, the distinction between reference grammar books and grammar course books is usually ignored (Huang 1991b). In Liu, Wu and Yu's (1990) survey, the grammar books used as course books in

20 universities/colleges/institutes are: (a) Zhang et al (1983), (b) Leech and Svartvik (1975), (c) Christophersen and Sandved (1969), (d) Thomson and Martinet (1980), (e) Zhang (1979). Of the five books, only the first was written as a course book; the others are reference books. The main reason for using reference books as course books is that a reference book is perceived to be better than a course book when grammar teaching is lecture-based and teacher-centred (Huang 1991b, also see Section 5.4 and 5.5 above and Section 5.6.3.4 below).

#### 5.6.2.6 Review of two grammar books

As indicated in the previous section, Thomson and Martinet (1980) and Zhang et al (1983) are among the books used for the grammar course. In this section, these two books will be reviewed briefly. The basic reason for giving attention to Thomson and Martinet (1980) is that it is very popular in China <sup>6</sup> and has been used as a grammar course book at GIFL for at least five years running to complement the CECL core course. On the other hand, the reasons for bringing Zhang et al (1983) into prominence are: (a) It was written and then recommended by Chinese ELT authorities as a course book for the grammar course in China, and (b) It is gaining more and more popularity: 9 out of the 20 universities/colleges/institutes in Liu, Wu and Yu's (1990:55) survey used it as the grammar course book.



(1) A Practical English Grammar

The book A Practical English Grammar (Thomson and Martinet 1980) is intended chiefly for intermediate and advanced adult students of English as a foreign language. It is a reference book although the authors did not preclude the possibility of it being used as a course book. There are 33 chapters in the book, each dealing with different grammar points. The treatment of the grammar items ranges from morphology to syntax. The layout is simplicity itself. The chapter usually begins with the form and then the usage (in the sense of use to create a correct form). The book reflects old-fashioned prescriptive grammar; it is knowledge-oriented because readers are told when a certain grammar item is used and when it is not used. This contrasts with the reader-oriented approach adopted in Sinclair et al (1990) where readers are provided the option that 'if you want to do this then you say that'.

Although the book has many shortcomings (e.g., see Gower 1981:53-4; Wekker 1981:59-60; Rea-Dickins and Woods 1988:628), it is still very popular and has been used as a course book not only in China, but also in other countries (for example, the Netherlands, see Wekker *op. cit.*).

What Thomson and Martinet (1980) lacks but Chinese students of English need includes: (a) a clear and systematic treatment of English sentence structure and (b) a pedagogically-oriented contrastive description of

English and Chinese in relation to learning English for communication (cf. Wekker op. cit.). As Wekker (op. cit.) rightly points out, 'global editions' of grammars cannot always meet the specific needs of students from different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds (cf. Palmer 1921/1964:129, Johnson 1978:25-26, Widdowson 1980:169, 1986a:41, among others). In short, I would say that Thomson and Martinet (1980) is not a suitable course book to complement the CECL core course.

(2) A New English Grammar Course book

This book -- A New English Grammar Course book (Zhang et al 1983) -- was written in Chinese as a course book and is aimed at English majors at tertiary institutions in China. In fact, it is intended to be a/the course book for the grammar course laid out in CNESSTE. It was derived from Zhang et al (1981-3), which is a reference book mainly based on Quirk et al (1972), Close (1975), Leech (1971), Leech and Svartvik (1975), and others. There are 42 'lectures' in the book and the treatment of the grammar items, following Quirk et al (1972) and others, is syntax-based. That is, morphological points are discussed under the headings of syntactic framework. Explanations of certain structures are usually followed by exercises on the structures. For example, in 'Lecture 11: The Aspect (1) -- Progressive Aspect' (Zhang et al 1983:122-137) there are three sections of explanation: (1) The usage of the present

progressive, which is followed by an exercise which requires students to 'put the verbs in bracket into the simple or the present progressive' (Exercise 1). (2) The usage of the past progressive, which is followed by two exercises: Exercise 2: 'Write either the simple past or the past progressive form as appropriate' and 3: 'Indicate by YES or NO whether the verbs underlined in the passage below could, in the context, be properly changed from non-progressive to progressive, or vice versa'. (3) The relationship between the progressive aspect and the lexical meaning of the verb; there are two exercises to go with this section, one of which is immediately after the first part of the explanation (Exercise 4: 'Put the verbs in brackets into the progressive or non-progressive form') and the other is at the end of the whole explanation (Exercise 5: 'Write either the simple present or the present progressive form as appropriate'). I would say that this 'Lecture' is a typical one.

Having been a user of Thomson and Martinet (1980) and Zhang et al (1983) and a teacher of the grammar course at GIFL for six years, I would say that Zhang et al is better than Thomson and Martinet as a grammar course book in the Chinese context. Zhang et al has many strong points that Thomson and Martinet (1980) lack. For example: (1) Following Quirk et al 1972) it is syntax-based and it provides a fairly systematic treatment of sentence structure, which is more pedagogically

attractive and relevant. By contrast, Thomson and Martinet (1980) is basically morphology-based in that most of the unit headings are morphological items. (2) It reflects some recently accepted analysis in grammatical awareness, such as the determiner-system, the two-tense and two-aspect system (although students often feel confused at the beginning), the distinction between stative and dynamic verbs, and the importance of cohesion and coherence in discourse. (3) As it was intended as a textbook, there are exercises following explanations, which were designed to practise specific grammar points. (4) Since it was written for Chinese learners, there are useful contrastive descriptions of English and Chinese in the book.

However, there are many shortcomings in Zhang et al (1983), some of which I shall mention here. (1) Like Thomson and Martinet (1980), this book is knowledge-oriented rather than skill-oriented or reader-oriented. It is more prescriptive than descriptive. The underlying assumption is that learning a language is learning its system. (2) Because of its knowledge-oriented nature, its syllabus was based on language-as-a-system rather than language-for-communication, while its exercises were presented as mere exercises rather than tasks. Most of the exercises are 'goal-less', 'meaningless', 'form-focused', 'choice-limited' and/or 'manipulative' rather than 'goal-directed', 'meaningful', 'meaning-focused', 'choice-free' and/or 'personalised'. The underlying

teaching methodology is teacher-centred, teaching-centred and 'intervention-bound' rather than 'learning-centred' and 'intervention-free'.

### (3) Summary and conclusion

As has been argued in the above discussion, both Thomson and Martinet (1980) and Zhang et al (1983) are knowledge-oriented rather than skill-/reader-oriented. Both books treat language as a system of grammatical rules, not language as a system for expressing meanings in communication. Most of the accompanying exercises are form-focused and manipulative rather than meaning-focused and interactive. Besides, their assumptions about language and language learning are in conflict with those of the CECL core course. Therefore, I would argue that neither book can be used as an appropriate CECL grammar course book.

## 5.6.3 Grammar Teaching -- Classroom Observation

### 5.6.3.1 Introduction

In this part I shall describe as objectively as possible the classroom English grammar [morphology and syntax] teaching to English majors in China's tertiary education. The description will be based on (a) my own experience and (b) sample observations of grammar teaching lessons.

### (1) Experience

When I was an undergraduate at GIFL during the mid-1970s, I observed grammar lessons very carefully because I was very interested in learning grammar. Immediately after graduation I received further training in a one-year course specially for teacher trainees, where we were offered a grammar course, whose lessons I observed with interest. Shortly after the training course I was assigned to work with an experienced teacher of the grammar course to learn to become a qualified teacher of the grammar course. When I later became a teacher of the course I also observed my partner's classroom grammar teaching.<sup>7</sup> Although my observations were conducted at different times and the lessons were taught by four different teachers who used different course books<sup>8</sup>, the teaching procedures, techniques, and other issues were surprisingly similar, if not the same.

### (2) Observation

In order to find out whether the conclusions I drew from my own experience were specific to GIFL or general in the Chinese ELT context, I designed a checklist (see Appendix 3) for the observation of classroom grammar teaching to English majors in China's tertiary institutions and sent it to my friends who are teachers of English at the tertiary level (all of whom, except one, have been awarded an MSc or MA in applied linguistics or ELT) and asked them to observe grammar

lessons for me. I received five reports of their observations.<sup>9</sup> One observation was done in a comprehensive university, one in a normal university, one in a university of technology, two in teachers' colleges. Although the five observations were conducted in different types of institution and in different parts of the country (two in the north, one in the central part, and two in the south), the results are very similar and match my own experience at GIFL.

I shall, in the following, synthesise the reports of the five observations carried out by my friends and the four done by me and make a description of classroom grammar teaching to English majors at the tertiary level.

#### 5.6.3.2 The teacher

Of the nine teachers observed, five were lecturers, three were assistant lecturers, and one a professor. The average age of the nine teachers whose lessons were observed was 40, with the oldest being 54 and the youngest 26.<sup>10</sup> Only one of them had received further training in an 'English-speaking' country (Malta). All of them had experience in teaching grammar; most of them had been teaching grammar for at least three years. One of them had an MA in linguistics and applied linguistics.

#### 5.6.3.3 The students

The students in eight out of the nine classes were in their second-year and the average age was about 20



years old. The students of the other class were teacher trainees, whose average age was about 23. The second-year students had learned English in secondary school (as one of the school subjects) for about six years and at university as majors for more than one year. The students in three classes (i.e., those in the normal university, and the two teachers' colleges) were to be teachers in secondary schools after graduation. And the students in one class (i.e., those in the university of technology) were to be ESP teachers of non-English majors at tertiary level. The teacher trainees in the GIFL class were teachers of English as a major at tertiary level. The students in the other classes were studying at GIFL and a comprehensive university and their future jobs would not be known before graduation.

#### 5.6.3.4 The lesson

This section will discuss four issues: (a) general information about the classes, (b) teaching strategies and techniques, (c) exercises, and (d) steps of the lesson.

##### (1) General information

The class size of the lessons observed was fairly small, considering the Chinese ELT context. There were about 22 students in each class. The furniture of all the classes was so arranged that the students' desks all faced forward in rows. The teacher stood on a raised

platform at the front of the class and the students were seated in rows facing the teacher. This arrangement of the desks not only made the teacher the centre and the focus of attention but also suggested that the lesson was teacher-fronted, lecture-based and formal. There were two periods (50 minutes each) of the grammar lesson, with 10 minutes for a break. The course books used and the frequency were as follows:

Table 5.2: Course books used

Course book	Frequency
1. Zhang <u>et al</u> (1983)	3
2. Eckersley and Eckersley (1960)	1
3. Thomson and Martinet (1980)	1
4. Compiled by the classroom teachers	4

Three out of the four course books compiled by the classroom teachers were mainly based on Eckersley and Eckersley (1960), Thomson and Martinet (1980), and Zhang (1979); the other one was based on Close (1975), Quirk et al (1972), and Leech (1971). In the process of teaching, the teachers all followed the procedures (sequence) in the course books.

The topics being dealt with when the lessons were observed were all different; but the focus of the lesson was similar: the understanding of the rules and their usage (in the sense of use to create a correct form).

## (2) Teacher-fronted and lecture-based

All the nine lessons were lecture-based. More than 85 per cent of the class time was taken up with teacher talking. The students' talking took place only when they were asked to answer questions. As to whether students interrupted the teacher to ask questions, this happened in only two of the classes. The medium of instruction in eight out of the nine classes was mainly English; in these classes, Chinese was used only when grammatical terms, difficult rules or contrastive analysis were given. Most of the examples of the usage of rules were presented orally, as most of them were in the course book.

## (3) Exercises

Four classes did not do any exercises during the lesson. The other five did some exercises (about 10 minutes). All except one had after-class homework to do. Keys to the homework exercises would be given at the beginning of the next lesson (one week later). When exercises were done during the lesson, the classroom grouping was either whole-class work with the teacher asking the question and students answering together or individual work with one student answering the teacher's question or all the students doing written exercises themselves. For the oral exercises, the types were questions-and-answers and oral translation. As for the written exercises, they were either blank-filling,

multiple-choice, translation, transformation, or error correction.

#### (4) Steps of the lesson

As indicated earlier, the lesson was teacher-fronted and lecture-based. The teachers began the lesson by giving the keys to the homework exercises, or/and reviewing what was taught in the last lesson. Then the topic of the lesson was introduced. The teaching strategy was grammar explanation. The usual steps were: rule --> example; rule --> example; ... Two out of the nine teachers spent about 10 minutes explaining general issues about the grammatical topics (one was 'Why is there no future tense in English?' and the other was 'What is gender?'). The whole procedure of the lesson was essentially that described by Jia (1989:31) (see Section 5.5.2 above).

#### 5.6.3.5 Comments from the observers

The five observers all gave detailed comments on the lessons they observed. Three (i.e., those who observed the teacher trainers' lessons) thought that explanation of the rules was necessary because as teacher trainees the students had not only to learn the correct usage of the rules but also to understand why the rules were correct. They also believed that the grammar explanation strategy was appropriate because the learners were adults and it was more efficient. Four of the five observers

said that it was a pity that teacher-talking took most of the class time. Three observers said that, because of the organisation of the lessons, students were passive in the lesson and thus many were not interested in what was going on in class.

#### 5.6.4 Summary and Conclusion

From this small-scale observation of classroom grammar teaching, I obtain an impression of grammar teaching in the present Chinese ELT context: teacher-fronted, lecture-based, and textbook-based. The teaching strategy is grammar explanation and the focus of the teaching is on the understanding of the rules rather than the use (in the sense of Widdowson (1978a), i.e., 'use' to create an appropriate meaning) of the rules. Classroom groupings are either individual work or whole-class work, and exercise types are not heterogeneous or personalised. As grammar teaching is lecture-based, the differences between reference books and course books are ignored.

As we shall see in Section 6.6.2 in the following chapter, replies to my survey suggest that students do not like lecture-based teaching, or rule-giving or explanation of rules. They express a preference for activities such as learning rules subconsciously from listening to and reading English and discovering rules for themselves by studying examples of grammar points.

In other words, they are in favour of a learning-centred strategy in learning grammar. They prefer pairwork and group work to individual work or whole-class work, and they like creative activities better than manipulative ones. They are more in favour of communication-oriented exercises than of structure-based ones. They prefer exercises presented to them as tasks to exercises which are merely pattern drills or mechanical structural manipulations.

From this evidence it is clear that the present practice of grammar teaching runs counter to the opinions, expectations, and wishes of learners as expressed in my survey. The conflict is mainly due to the lack of (a) well-defined objectives of grammar teaching, (b) a communication-oriented course book, and (c) a communicative teaching methodology in grammar teaching (Huang 1991b).

## 5.7 CLT in China

The communicative approach to language teaching was first introduced to China in the late 1970s (e.g., Li 1978; also see Li 1989:1), when China began to adopt her open-door policy. Although it is more than a decade since the introduction of the approach, there is still much discussion and debate about its appropriacy to the Chinese context. The following two sections will (a) review the reactions to CLT and then (b) discuss its feasibility and applicability in the Chinese ELT context.

### 5.7.1 Reactions to CLT

A great deal has been written about the communicative approach to ELT in China (e.g., Allen and Spada 1982, 1983, Maingay and Langley 1983, 1984; Li 1984b, 1985b, Maley 1984a, Sun 1985, Malcolm and Malcolm 1988, Burnaby and Sun 1989, Jia 1989, Li 1989, among others); some (e.g., Li 1984b, 1985b, Maley 1984a, Jia 1989) are determined that the approach can be applied to the Chinese ELT context while others (e.g., Sampson 1984, Burnaby and Sun 1989) are rather dubious about the applicability, with others (e.g., Sun 1985, Li 1989) looking at it with reservation.

Maley (1984a) analyses the Chinese ELT context by looking at current teaching practice, the teacher factor and the learner factor, and argues that moves towards a communicative approach in the Chinese ELT context are both desirable and feasible. He also suggests that one avenue of approach is to make full use of the existing strengths inherent in the present ELT system, by showing the possible initiatory moves which may be incorporated into present practice. Li (e.g., 1984b), after working on a communication-oriented course book for Chinese learners (i.e., Li et al 1987-1989) for some years, becomes more confident that a Chinese approach to CLT is not only possible but also desirable, and applicable (see Section 5.8 below).

Sampson (1984), after a review of China's traditions and culture and a discussion of the similarities and



differences between scientific theories and educational theories, concludes that educational theories and teaching methods are value-laden and cannot be universally applicable. Her arguments imply that it is a waste of effort to try to export revolutionary approaches such as the communicative to China. However, Burnaby and Sun (1989) report a survey, using questionnaires and interviews, on the views of Chinese teachers of English at tertiary institutions, some of whom were teachers of non-English majors, which contradicts this. Their study suggested that the communicative approach was 'good for teaching people who were about to go to English-speaking countries to live and study, but not for other Chinese students of English, particularly not English majors' (Burnaby and Sun 1989:226).

Sun (1985), Jia (1989), and Li (1989) examined the Chinese ELT context and conclude that it is no easy job to make full use of communicative teaching ideas in China. They also raised some of the issues concerning the applicability of the communicative approach, e.g., the aim of language teaching, the teaching materials, the teaching methodology, the training of competent teachers.

To conclude, it must be remembered that China is such a large country that any generalisation without comprehensive research is very risky. People in different areas of the country are likely to have different attitudes and reactions to a new teaching approach because of the differences in cultural,

economic, and educational conditions. To say that CLT is not appropriate in one area does not mean that it cannot be applied in another. Therefore, in order to see whether CLT is a better alternative to traditional language teaching in a particular area, empirical research into the ELT situation in the area is required before any conclusion can be drawn. It is for this reason that the main research question of the present study is about GIFL students' and teachers' perceptions of and attitudes and reactions to ELT in general and CLT and its application to grammar in particular, for the proposed course is to be implemented at GIFL.

#### 5.7.2 Feasibility and Applicability

Maley (1984a), who believes that CLT is both desirable and feasible in the Chinese ELT context, proposes that the strengths and advantages of CLT be incorporated into the present Chinese ELT framework, and makes specific suggestions about changes in classroom teaching. While I agree with him that a Chinese approach to CLT is possible, I would suggest that the following issues should be taken into consideration:

(1) Adaptation of CLT. As Chinese educational theories and teaching practices are different from those in Western countries and since educational theories, teaching methods, concepts and procedures are value-laden rather than value-free (Sampson 1984), a possible Chinese approach to CLT would consider carefully and

systematically the constraints and factors involved in its application (Maley 1984b) and make full use of the strengths inherent in the present teaching practice (Maley 1984a:46). CECL is the first Chinese approach to CLT, which will be discussed in Section 5.8 below.

(2) The design of communicative materials for Chinese learners. One step in the adaptation of CLT is the design of teaching materials for Chinese learners, and some communicative or communication-oriented course books are already available for learners in China (e.g., Li et al 1987-1989; Heilongjiang University 1981-5). CNESSTE (1989) emphasises the importance of training students to become communicatively competent (see Section 5.3 above). In the national syllabus there are 'notional-functional' and 'communicative skills' components and requirements (CNESSTE 1989:9-10, 57-102). All this shows that the communicative approach is being applied and tailored to the given setting. However, there is still much to be done on the development of a communicative methodology appropriate to the Chinese context. The design of communicative materials is only one step towards a Chinese approach to CLT.

(3) Teacher-training and the introduction of a dynamic teaching methodology. The implementation of communicative materials in the classroom requires teachers to adopt a dynamic rather than static and fixed teaching methodology, which incorporates the present teaching framework without bringing it down (Maley

1984a:46). This in turn involves the training of teachers. The issue of teacher-training has been neglected, because applied linguistics has not had the same status as theoretical linguistics; however, recently, there have been strong arguments for the importance of teacher-training in China's educational reform. For example, Utley (1986:52) strongly argues that if ELT teachers are untrained or poorly-trained then little or nothing can be achieved in education, no matter what syllabus is adopted and what textbook is used (cf. Brumfit 1982:75). As Liu and Wu's (1989) survey shows, teachers declare themselves eager to 'renew' their knowledge and improve their professional skills (see Section 5.9.3 below). Students state a preference for communication-oriented teaching activities and procedures and techniques (see Section 6.6.1 and 6.6.2). All this implies that teachers and students are willing or ready to make changes to the present practice.

(4) Communication-oriented evaluation of language teaching. The application of any teaching approach/strategy is usually affected by the related evaluation and test. In order to apply communicative teaching ideas, we must have communicative language tests. The design of communication-oriented evaluation and tests is too important to ignore because many students/teachers are learning/teaching for tests and evaluation. It goes without saying that the widely-used 'discrete point' tests (Davies 1978/1982) are not suitable for

communication-oriented courses, because such courses focus on global, integrative, holistic learning and teaching whereas discrete point tests evaluate atomistic and isolating knowledge and ability.

### 5.7.3 Concluding Remarks

If the above issues are taken into consideration, it is very likely that a Chinese approach to CLT will succeed and help 'produce' more communicatively competent students. There is already one Chinese approach to CLT (i.e., CECL), which will be discussed in detail in the following section. The evaluation of the course materials written in line with this approach will be reported in Section 6.6.1.4.

## 5.8 The CECL Project

In the preceding section, attitudes to CLT in China were reviewed and it was argued that CLT in China is both desirable and feasible. This section will examine a Chinese approach to CLT -- the CECL project, and compare the principles and procedures of this approach with the traditional approach to ELT in China. The difference between the CECL core course and my proposed grammar course will also be discussed.

### 5.8.1 CECL: An Overview

This overview will describe the following aspects of

the CECL project: the origin of the project, its aim, its underlying assumptions, its syllabus, and discuss some methodological issues.

#### 5.8.1.1 From ECP to CECL

In 1978 the open-door policy led the then Chinese Ministry of Education to commission three foreign languages institutes (i.e., Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai) to produce new course materials for English majors during the Stage-one Education at tertiary level. In 1979, Professor Li Xiaojun of GIFL and two Canadian teachers, Wendy Allen and Nina Spada, began to work on a communication-oriented course, called English for Communicative Purposes (ECP). The underlying assumptions, aims and objectives, syllabus, and teaching principles and practices of the ECP materials are discussed in Allen and Spada (1982, 1983).

As it was a communication-oriented course, the project began with an extensive learners' needs analysis in 1979 (Allen and Spada 1982) and then course content was determined and writing began. In 1980 the first draft syllabus was produced and piloting began later that year (Allen and Spada 1982, 1983; Malcolm and Malcolm 1988).

From 1982, the project became sponsored jointly by GIFL and the British Council. As a result, two British teachers of English were employed to work on the project every year from 1982 to 1988 with Li Xiaojun and other

Chinese teachers and support personnel. Susan Maingay and Gail Langley were the first two British teachers who worked on the project. They went to GIFL in autumn 1982 and the ECP project was changed into the CECL (Communicative English for Chinese Learners) project (Li 1984b, Maingay and Langley 1983, 1984).

The mimeographed versions of the CECL core course<sup>11</sup> were used and piloted (Maingay and Langley 1984) with the first and second year English majors at GIFL from 1982 to 1988. The whole set of the CECL core course was finalised by the first half of the year 1988. CECL 1 and CECL 2 and their accompanying teacher's handbooks and audio tapes were published in 1987 and 1988 by Shanghai Foreign Languages Education Press and Guangzhou Foreign Languages Audio-video Press respectively. CECL 3 and CECL 4 and their accompanying teacher's handbooks and audio tapes were published the following years.

Each CECL core course consists of ten units (for the content of the whole course, see Section 5.8.1.4 below), two of which are reviews (mid-term and end-of-term review), which are followed by the mid-term test and the final test. Each unit is designed to occupy 16 class hours, supported by 16 hours outside class. That is, each unit takes two weeks' class time. The whole CECL core course is designed to provide the basis for the core programme (i.e., the 'Comprehensive English' course, see Section 5.3.1 above) for English majors over the first two years of their studies (i.e., Stage-one education) at



the university.

From the beginning of ECP to the publication of the CECL core course (i.e., Li et al 1987-1989), the project took almost ten years and the combined efforts of Li Xiaojun and ten writers from Canada, Australia and Britain and more than ten other Chinese writers/teachers. A great investment of time, expertise, and money was made by GIFL as well as the British Council.

Since 1987, with the publication and the availability of the CECL core course book, other institutions (besides GIFL) have begun to use the CECL materials as course books. Teacher training programmes for those who were not involved in the pilot project 12 have been running continuously since Autumn 1987.

#### 5.8.1.2 The aim of the CECL core course

The main aim of CECL is 'to help the students acquire not just a knowledge of form but communicative competence', which is believed to be made up of 'three component parts: linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, and cognitive and affective capacity' (Li 1984a/1987b:iv). These three components correspond to the form, the use and the content of language and 'are not three separate entities but three dimensions of one entity' (Li loc. cit.).

#### 5.8.1.3 Underlying assumptions

The view of language and that of learning, the basic

assumptions, and principles which underlie the CECL project have been spelled out by Li (e.g., 1984a/1987b, 1984b, 1985a, 1985b), the main compiler of the CECL core course, and Maingay and Langley (1983, 1984), and were summarised by Malcolm and Malcolm (1988).

The basic view of language and learning taken by CECL is that 'language is communication, and learning a language is learning to communicate' (Li 1984a/1987b:iii) and 'it is through communication that one learns to communicate' (op. cit.:v). According to this view, language is more than phonology, grammar and vocabulary, and learning the phonology, grammar and vocabulary is not equivalent to learning the language.

As the view of language CECL takes is interactional (Richards and Rodgers 1986:17, also see Section 2.4.1), 'meaning' and 'fluency' are specially emphasised, and it is argued that 'fluency activities make for communicative competence, while accuracy activities only account for linguistic competence' (Li 1984a/1987b:ix).

#### 5.8.1.4 The syllabus

CECL is a theme-based, integrated course. The syllabus is topic-based and so 'sometimes resembles the situation-based, sometimes the skill-based, sometimes the task-based' (Yalden 1988:33). The components of the course are seen as a web of strands giving a multi-dimensional focus, which are the four traditional skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) plus functions,

grammar, study skills and culture (Maingay and Langley 1984:2). Each strand consists of a checklist of the items or micro-skills which are considered to be important in the course. The eight main units of CECL 1 and two main units of CECL 2 have functional titles, whereas the other main units in CECL 2 and those in CECL 3 and CECL 4 are topic-based or thematic. The following are the titles of the units in the course books:

CECL 1: Unit 1. Meeting people; Unit 2. Discussing

daily life; Unit 3. Describing things; Unit 4. Talking about people; Unit 5. Review; Unit 6. Describing places; Unit 7. Getting things done; Unit 8. Looking forward; Unit 9. Talking about the past; Unit 10. Final review.

CECL 2: Unit 1. Getting to places; Unit 2. Dealing with people; Unit 3. House and home; Unit 4. Education; Unit 5. Review; Unit 6. Animals and plants; Unit 7. Celebrations; Unit 8. Food and drink; Unit 9. Health and medicine; Unit 10. Final review.

CECL 3: Unit 1. Processes and cycles; Unit 2. Advertising; Unit 3. Sports; Unit 4. Jobs; Unit 5. Review; Unit 6. Generations and the family; Unit 7. Government and history; Unit 8. Tourism; Unit 9. Minorities; Unit 10. Final review.

CECL 4: Unit 1. Environment and resources; Unit 2. Language; Unit 3. Entertainment; Unit 4. Civilisations of the past; Unit 5. Review; Unit 6. Social problems; Unit 7. International relations;

Unit 8. Economics and trade; Unit 9. Myth and religion; Unit 10. Final review.

As was pointed out by Maingay and Langley (1984:3), the main focus of CECL 1 is on the activation of oral-aural skills, going on to more reading and writing and project work in CECL 2, CECL 3, and CECL 4. The eight basic strands are considered to be included in an integrated way and the skills to be interrelated rather than rigidly separable.

As for the selection of the content, the CECL core course aims to provide real and ample input, which includes authenticity and appropriacy. It is believed that the more language to which learners are exposed the better, provided that the input is relevant to the students and appropriate to the Chinese context.

Gradation of the content, on the other hand, is not based on linguistic criteria, but is through the control of the complexity of the task. As Li explains, 'simple tasks are given to the students in the early stages, and more challenging ones in the later stage' (Li 1984b:6). It has also been taken into consideration that the difficulty or easiness of a task depends not solely on the task itself, but also on factors such as performance requirements, the conceptual, cultural, and linguistic difficulty of the input (Li loc. cit.).

#### 5.8.1.5 Roles of the teacher and learners

As it is argued that language is communication and that 'communication is a process rather than a result -- a flexible, dynamic, ongoing process' (Li 1984a/1987b: vi), CECL is learner-oriented<sup>13</sup> and the classroom methodology is learning-centred; the CECL teacher is required to:

(1) see the learner as a whole person (Li 1985b). The teacher must 'try not to be merely a teacher, but a human being as well, and see his students not merely as students, but as human beings as well' (Li 1984a/1987b: vii). This reflects the learner-oriented approach of the CECL project.

(2) focus on the process, not the product. The teacher is there to provide conditions for the learning process and to monitor the operation of that process (Malcolm and Malcolm 1988:7), rather than to provide correct answers to questions and/or exercises.

(3) 'try to refrain from taking over from the learner what they should do themselves' (Li 1984a/1987b:vii). Learners are expected to gain or provide information by reading, listening, writing or speaking for themselves, not to receive from the teacher.

As the CECL core course is learner-oriented, the learner has an active role in the learning process. He is expected to communicate with his classmates and the teacher, to learn for himself, rather than merely to listen to the teacher talking all the time or to wait for

the teacher to give the correct answer.

#### 5.8.1.6 Activity types

Since the aim of the CECL core course is to help learners acquire communicative competence and since learning a language is viewed as learning to communicate, the CECL activities are designed 'to simulate communication' (Li 1984a/1987b:v). As Li (op. cit.:v-vi) points out, the communicative activities in the CECL core course are designed on the basis of the following understanding of the conditions of communication in the classroom:

(1) Communication is carried out by means of language for the purpose of conveying or receiving information.

(2) Communication is contextualised in various senses: textual, topical, spatial, temporal, psychological, interpersonal, social, and intercultural.

(3) Communication entails freedom and unpredictability within the given context.

(4) Communication presupposes authenticity of the context (in relation to the learner) and of the language (in relation to the context).

However, Li admits that these 'four conditions cannot be fully satisfied at all times' (op. cit.:vi). Therefore, not all activities in the CECL core course are communicative; rather, they range from purely communicative to purely linguistic, with all degrees of semi- or quasi-communicative activities in between (loc. cit.).

It is stated that the linguistic activities are subordinate to the communicative ones and are seen to serve the latter.

The unit in the CECL core course is made up of activities, which fall into different types.<sup>14</sup> For example:

Category A: Interaction; Role-play; Listening for gist/specific information; Problem solving; Game; Reading for gist/specific information.

Category B: Dictation; Dictionary work; Listening for language; Filling in blanks; Reading for language.

Although it is not appropriate to say that activities in Category A are communicative whereas those in B are non-communicative because they are merely isolated activities which may or may not be communicative (Morrow 1981:59), I would assume that those in Category A are more intrinsically communicative than those in B, even though I agree that communicative activities are reflected in the learning process rather than in isolation.

#### 5.8.1.7 Summary and conclusion

To conclude, 'CECL is an attempt to apply the communicative approach in EFL in the Chinese context' (Li 1984a/1987b:iii) and it is an EGP (English for General Purposes) course. Its learners are undergraduates majoring in English at tertiary institutions in China. Although many of its claims are similar to or the same as



those adopted by the strong version of CLT (see Section 2.3.1), I would argue that it is a teaching-about-communication course rather than a teaching-through-communication one (for reasons for the argument, see Section 5.8.2.4 below).

In addition to the CECL core course, there are supplementary CECL sub-courses such as Phonetics, Grammar, Vocabulary, supplementary Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Viewing (Li et al 1987b:xi) which are now being planned or written. The proposed grammar course is a CECL sub-course (Grammar), which is intended to complement the CECL core course.

It should be emphasised here that the practice of CECL classroom teaching is quite different from that of the traditional classroom described in Section 5.5 (see Xiao 1984, 1988).

It can be said that those at GIFL who are willing to devote themselves to the CECL project or to be involved in it are enthusiastic and interested in the work (whether using the materials in the class or writing the materials) of the project. There are teachers in other institutions who are interested in CECL materials and thus support the work of the project with enthusiasm. However, there are also overtly and covertly sceptical attitudes to CECL materials from staff at GIFL. As was observed by Maingay and Langley (1984), when CECL materials were being piloted, the children of staff members (who were then students at GIFL) were

deliberately not placed in the classes where the piloting took place. As the present study and the proposed course is part of the CECL project, teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions to the CECL core course may reveal their attitudes and reactions to the communicative approach, both in the CECL project and in language teaching generally. Therefore, in the design of the survey of GIFL teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions to ELT and grammar teaching and learning (see Chapter 6), one question (Question 15 in both questionnaires) concerning the respondent's attitude to the CECL core course was included. The result will be reported in Section 6.6.1.4.

#### 5.8.2 CECL and Non-CECL

##### -- A Comparison of Two Approaches

As has been indicated earlier (Sections 5.4 and 5.5 above), most teaching of English in China is based on the traditional approach (i.e., 'grammar-translation method', the 'direct method', or the 'structuro-audio-lingual method' -- Maley 1984a:44). The aim of language teaching is mainly the achievement of grammatical competence. The focus of teaching is on the structural features of the language. Correctness and accuracy are emphasised at the expense of appropriacy and fluency. Memorisation of vocabulary and texts and the internalisation of grammatical rules are strongly recommended. Much of the language to which students are exposed is simplified,

artificial, and/or formal/bookish. Students have few opportunities to use language as communication in the classroom. Classroom activities are typically teacher-controlled. Much of the amount of class time is taken up by the teacher talking.

In the following two sections the principles which underlie the CECL course will be first reviewed and then compared with the practices of the traditional approach in China.

#### 5.8.2.1 A Chinese approach to CLT

CECL is the first serious attempt to apply communicative theory and methodology to TEFL in China. The principles underlying the CECL materials have been discussed by Li (Li 1984a/1987b, 1984b, 1985a, 1985b), and Maingay and Langley (1983, 1984). Malcolm and Malcolm (1988:4-9), after a thorough study of the CECL materials and the related articles, formalised the following 12 CECL principles.

The first three principles concern the view of language. Principle 1 concerns the nature of language. Language is more than phonology, vocabulary and grammar, it is meaningful message exchange. Language is seen as communication (Li 1984a/1987b: iii). Principle 2 is concerned with the dimensions of language. Language has three dimensions: linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive/affective. Principle 3 is about the units of language. The smallest self-contained units of language-as-

communication are not at the sentential level but at discoursal level.

Principles 4 to 6 embody a view of the learner. Principle 4 is related to the student's mode of learning. As Li puts it, it is through communicating that students learn to communicate (Li 1984a/1987b:v). The learner is assumed to learn the language as he uses it. Principle 5 concerns the learner's input. Language that the learner can use for learning must be language-as-communication. Learners are expected to use the language that is authentic and appropriate to their lives in China. Principle 6 is concerned with a condition for learning. This condition for learning refers to the context of learning language as communication in which learners develop means of coping with unpredictability and with choice of response.

Principles 7 to 9 are about the role of the teacher. Principle 7 is related to the teacher's attitude to and understanding of learning. The teacher should put the focus on the process rather than on the product (result). He is there to provide the conditions for the process of learning and to monitor the operation of the learning process. Principle 8 concerns the teacher's attitude to and understanding of the learner. He should see the learner as a whole person. Language can only be learned, but not taught. As Li (1985b:17) argues, learning a foreign language helps one to grow fuller as a person; it is impossible for a teacher to help a student learn a

foreign language without trying to help him grow as a person as well. Principle 9 is about the teacher's attitude to and understanding of the language. The teacher should allow fluency to take precedence over accuracy. Fluency activities are more important than accuracy activities because the former make for communicative competence while the latter only account for grammatical competence (Li 1984a/1987b:ix).

The last three principles concern aspects of course design. Principle 10 is about the selection of the language input. Language input should be both authentic (genuine, real) and ample. Principle 11 relates to gradation of the language input. Gradation is not based on linguistic but on communicative criteria and on the control of the complexity of the task. Finally, Principle 12 is about testing. As the course is taught as communication, testing should be communication-based rather than grammar-based.

The above 12 principles underlie the syllabus design, the material writing and the classroom techniques, practices and behaviours. In the following section common corresponding practices in the traditional approach will be listed in the order of the CECL principles.

#### 5.8.2.2 The traditional approach to language teaching

Since the CECL core course is only used in a few institutions in China, it is very important to contrast

the CECL approach with the traditional approach. Most of the following practices have been described in literature on Chinese ELT (e.g., Maley 1982, 1983/1986, 1984a, Allen and Spada 1982, Scovel 1983, Ting 1987, Li 1989). At the risk of over-simplifying, the traditional practices will be summarised below in a sequence that will facilitate comparison with the corresponding CECL principles discussed in the previous section.

Practice 1: Language is a set of structures. Learning a language is learning the rules of the language.

Practice 2: Language is made up of three components: phonology, vocabulary, and grammar.

Practice 3: The smallest self-contained units of a language are at the sentential level.

Practice 4: Memorisation of vocabulary and the internalisation of grammatical rules are emphasised.

Practice 5: The language that the learner can use in the classroom should be standardised, and it is usually formal and bookish.

Practice 6: Form and meaning are emphasised at the expense of use. Learners are required to do a great deal of mechanical drilling and the main criterion for success is usually correctness.

Practice 7: The teacher focuses on the product (result) rather than the process of classroom activities. He is the person who gives correct answers to the questions/exercises.

Practice 8: The teacher imposes teaching on the learner and insists on teaching rather than letting students learn by themselves. He treats the learner in the same way as a doctor who treats not the patient but the disease.

Practice 9: Accuracy is of primary importance. Being able to speak slowly and correctly is more important than being able to speak fluently and appropriately with grammatical mistakes.

Practice 10: Language input is restricted in terms of quantity and variety. Contextualisation is not important.

Practice 11: Gradation of language input is based on linguistic criteria.

Practice 12: Testing is focused on structural features and is thus structure-based.

The differences between the CECL approach and the traditional approach can be summarised as follows:

Table 5.3: Characteristics of two approaches to ELT

The CECL Approach	The Traditional Approach
<u>1. Nature of language:</u>	
Language is communication.	Language is a set of structures.
<u>2. Dimensions of language:</u>	
Language has 3 dimensions: linguistics, pragmatic, and cognitive/affective.	Language is made up of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar.



3. Units of language:

The self-contained units are at the discoursal level.

The self-contained units are at the sentential level.

4. Mode of learning:

It is through communication that one learns to communicate.

Memorisation and internalisation of words and rules are emphasised.

5. Learner's input:

Learners are expected to use the language that is authentic and appropriate to their lives.

The language that learners can use should be standardised.

6. Condition for learning:

Learners must develop means of coping with unpredictability and with choice of response.

Learners are required to do mechanical drills and the main criterion for success is correctness.

7. Teacher's attitude to learning:

The teacher should focus on process rather than product (result).

The teacher focuses on product (result) rather process.

8. Teacher's attitude to learner:

The teacher should see the learner as a whole person.

The teacher treats the learner as a doctor treats not the patient but the disease.

9. Teacher's attitude to language:

The teacher should allow fluency to take precedence over accuracy.

Accuracy is of primary importance.

10. Selection of language input:

Language input should be authentic and ample.

Language input is restricted in terms of quantity and variety.

11. Gradation of language input:

Gradation is based on communicative criteria.

Gradation is based on linguistic criteria.

12. Testing:

Testing should be communication-based.

Testing is focused on structural features and is structure-based.

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## 5.8.2.3 Discussion and conclusion

For those who are familiar with the communicative approach, the CECL principles are commendable whereas the traditional practices should be greatly modified. However, if the Chinese ELT context is taken into consideration, one is at once forced to think carefully of the principles and practices of the two different approaches. For example, there is nothing wrong in saying that language is communication and learning a language is learning to communicate. However, it may be argued that learning a language is learning a system of meanings and its realisation in form in real-life communication. On the other hand, as the classroom setting is not a natural language environment (Widdowson 1990:162; Sampson 1984:26), the claim that learning a language is learning to communicate may be challenged because in an unnatural language environment learning cannot be always meaningful and communicative. Furthermore, although it is easy to say that the teacher should not provide answers to the questions (exercises, tasks, activities) but the conditions for the process of learning, in practice neither teachers nor students may be happy with this practice. Besides, it must be

remembered that accuracy has an important role to play in the learning process (see Brumfit 1984a:119; Morrow 1981:64-65; Roberts 1982:119) and is in accordance with the investment principle (Widdowson 1990:133); a meaning-focused classroom may encourage or promote fossilisation and pidginisation (Higgs and Cifford 1982; Richards 1985a:43; Celce-Murcia and Hilles 1988:1-3). It may also be argued that memorisation of vocabulary, texts, and grammatical rules is also a way of learning (see Section 5.4 above and Section 6.6.1.2).

The views of language and language learning underlying the CECL approach indicate that CECL is a strong version of CLT (see Section 2.3.1). Clearly, it takes the interactional view of language (Richards and Rodgers 1986:17) and its learning theory is more humanistic (Rogers 1951, Stevick 1976, 1980) rather than simply cognitive, and the underlying learning model is 'creative construction' rather than 'skill-learning' (see Section 2.4.2.2, Littlewood 1984, Johnson 1986). However, from the point of view of its 'design', and 'procedure' (in the sense of Richards and Rodgers 1986), CECL is a weak version of CLT, although it is intended to be methodologically process-oriented (Li 1984a/1987b:vi). I would argue that CECL is basically a weak version of CLT rather than a strong one for four basic reasons. Firstly, its syllabus is more of a product-oriented nature because it is planned, pre-ordained, and imposed on teachers and learners and it gives priority to the

pre-specification of linguistic/content/skill objectives. Secondly, the content of the course was selected and determined on the basis of needs analysis (Munby 1978), and the learning activities are geared to a forecast of the learners' needs. Thirdly, both fluency, appropriacy and accuracy, correctness are taken into consideration, and accuracy activities have a very important role to play. Lastly, students' learning of the target language is conscious rather than unconscious.

If CECL is looked at as a method (Richards and Rodgers 1986), its approach is of the strong version of CLT whereas its design and procedure are of the weak version. Considering the Chinese ELT context, I would argue that CECL's views of language and language learning should be modified to be in accordance with its design and procedure components. That is, it would be better if CECL took the functional view of language rather than the interactional view (Richards and Rodgers 1986:17; also see Section 2.4.1), and a skill-learning model rather than a creative construction model. In an ELT context where (a) English is a foreign language, (b) there is no natural language environment, (c) learners are adults, whose motivation is more instrumental than integrative, and (d) there is a great shortage of competent teachers of English, it is unlikely that a strong version of CLT would be successful.

Because of CECL's approach to language and language learning, grammar has been neglected in the Comprehensive

English course (whose course book is the CECL core course book). As a result, a fairly large number of CECL students ignore the importance of grammar in the learning process, and are not willing to practise grammatical structures in class nor to summarise grammar points which have been taught/learned after class; still worse, they do not pay much attention to grammatical structures in speaking and writing and often confuse grammatical patterns (Xiao 1988:128).

### 5.8.3 Relationship Between CECL and CEGCCL

As was pointed out earlier (Section 5.8.1.7), the CECL project is made up of the CECL core course (i.e., Li *et al* 1987-1989) and the supplementary CECL sub-courses such as Grammar, Phonetics, Vocabulary. Since my proposed course is intended to be one of such sub-courses, this section will discuss the relationship between the CECL core course and the proposed grammar course (i.e., CEGCCL). For convenience, the differences will be looked at under the following seven headings: (a) aim and objectives, (b) views of language and language learning, (c) syllabus, (d) content and focus, (e) fluency and accuracy, (f) coordination and subordination, and (g) class time.

(1) Aim and objectives: The CECL core course aims to help students acquire communicative competence; although CEGCCL shares the same aim, it is more concerned with specific objectives (see Section 7.4.2.1).

(2) Views of language and language learning: As was indicated in Section 5.8.1.3, the basic views of language and language learning adopted by the CECL core course are that language is communication and that learning a language is learning to communicate. CEGCCL, as a CECL sub-course, takes a functional view of language and a skill-development model of learning (see Section 2.4). CEGCCL recognises the importance of the mastery of linguistic structures needed for communication. That is to say, for CEGCCL, teaching for communication means teaching students not only to do things through language but also to master the language forms necessary for communication. CEGCCL also assumes that learning the structures necessary for communication is an important part of the process of learning to communicate.

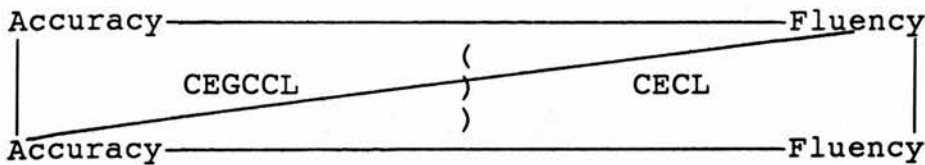
(3) Syllabus: The syllabus of the CECL core course is thematic (see Section 5.8.1.4 above), whereas CEGCCL will adopt a functional syllabus. The reasons for the preference for such a syllabus over a structural one will be discussed later (see Section 7.4).

(4) Content and focus: As an integrated EGP course, the CECL core course aims to help students develop different language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.). By contrast, CEGCCL is a grammar-specific 'discrete' course; it focuses mainly on the communicative use of the structural items of the target language. Although language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be

involved in the implementation of the course, the development of these skills is not the focus of the grammar course.

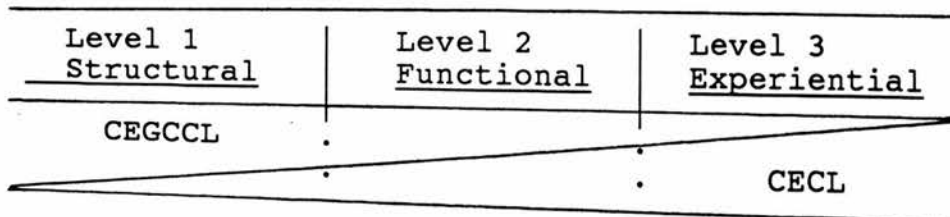
(5) Fluency and accuracy: As fluency and accuracy are two extremes on a continuum, it can be said that the CECL core course is intended to be a fluency-based course (Li 1984a/1987b:ix) while CEGCCL is designed as an accuracy-based one. If fluency and accuracy are at the two extremes of the four sides of a rectangle (cf. Brumfit 1984a:119), then CECL is fluency-oriented whereas CEGCCL is accuracy-oriented, as represented in the following figure:

Figure 5.1: Relationship between CECL and CEGCCL in terms of accuracy and fluency



Or if CECL and CEGCCL are viewed in relation to the three levels of communicative competence proposed by Allen (1983:36) (see Section 1.7), then CEGCCL is intended to be more structural than experiential while CECL is the other way round, as is represented in the following diagram:

Figure 5.2: Relationship between CECL and CEGCCL in terms of the levels of communicative competence





(6) Coordination and subordination: Both CECL and CEGCCL are intended to help students to learn to use the language for communication. In this sense, they are two different courses aiming at different aspects of the learning/teaching process (CNESSTE 1989). However, CEGCCL is designed to supplement the CECL core course, or to make up for what is not covered in the CECL core course, which means that CEGCCL is subordinate to CECL.

(7) Class time: The CECL core course is designed for use in the first two years of the four-year English major programme of studies at the university and it occupies seven to eight class hours a week, whereas CEGCCL is designed for the second-year students only and it takes two class hours a week in the two terms.

#### 5.8.4 Summary

This section began with an overview of the CECL project, the first serious attempt to apply the communicative approach to TEFL in the Chinese context. The origin of the CECL project, the aim of the CECL core course, its underlying assumptions, its syllabus, its classroom methodology, and its activity types were all examined in an overview. Then it went on to discuss the principles underlying the CECL core course and compared them with those that underlie traditional language teaching; then it pointed out the discrepancy between CECL's theory (approach) and practice (design and procedure); then it concluded that a totally

communicative approach may not be appropriate in the Chinese ELT context. Finally, the relationship between the CECL core course and the proposed grammar course was examined.

## 5.9 TEFL in China: Situation Analysis

This section will begin with some considerations for the design of a language teaching programme. Then it will review the Chinese ELT context by reporting on findings from surveys conducted recently. Finally, constraints and problems will be discussed.

### 5.9.1 Considerations for a Language Programme

It has been recognised (e.g., Maley 1984b, Hutchinson and Waters 1987, Richards 1990; cf. Munby 1978, Allen and Spada 1983, Stern 1984) that the design of a language teaching programme involves not only the writing and use of instructional materials and teaching methodologies, but also a number of other factors concerning the planning, development, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of the programme. When a language programme is being planned, attention should be paid to the following WH-QUESTIONS (apart from external considerations such as cultural factors, educational factors, and general organisational and administrative factors, see Maley 1984b):

1. WHY? -- Why is the programme necessary?
2. WHO? -- Who are the learners? Who are the teachers?

Who else (e.g., administrative assistant(s), inspector(s) ) are going to be involved in the implementation of the programme?

3. WHAT? -- What do the students need to learn? What aspects of language will the students need and therefore should be focused? What level of proficiency are the students at when the programme begins? What level must be achieved? What are the students' goals and expectations? What learning styles and study habits do the learners prefer? What training and experience do the teachers have? What is the degree of the teachers' (target) language proficiency? What do the teachers expect of the programme? What teaching methods, techniques and strategies do the teachers favour? What constraints (e.g., time, resources) are present? What kinds of evaluation (i.e., test, assessment) are needed?
4. WHEN? -- When is the learning to take place (e.g., at what stage of the whole learning process) ? Hence, how much time is available? How will it be allocated?
5. WHERE? -- Where is the learning programme to take place? Hence, what potential does the place provide? What limitation does it impose?
6. HOW? -- How will the learning be achieved? Hence, what are the underlying assumptions about the nature of language and language learning? What

syllabus type is likely to be most compatible with other elements of the programme? What methodology will best help implement the programme?

These questions are far from being exhaustive. They are internal factors concerned with what Richards (1990:1) calls 'situation analysis', which can be classified into categories such as 'learner factors', 'teacher factors', and 'administrative factors'. In the following discussion, these factors will be discussed in relation to findings from surveys about ELT in China and related to the proposed course where relevant and necessary.

#### 5.9.2 Learners

As was stated earlier, the learners on the proposed course are university English majors on a four-year degree course, who have been learning English for about six years in the secondary school before they enter the university.

In 1985 Gui (1986) conducted a survey of GIFL students (altogether 868 subjects, 512 of whom were English majors), investigating their attitudes to the teaching/learning environment in GIFL, their motivations, learning styles and habits, and their self-assessment of their language proficiency. He raised the following issues about learners' goals, expectations, and their learning styles.

(1) The learners' goals and expectations. Students are offered courses such as (a) the target language

(i.e., foreign language as a major) (both compulsory and optional courses), (b) Chinese (language and literature), (c) politics, (d) international relations, (e) a second foreign language, and (f) physical training; they like the courses of the foreign language as a major best and the course of politics least (Gui 1986:4). As far as the foreign language as a major is concerned, students are most interested in courses such as 'Interpretation' (i.e., Oral translation), 'Conversation', 'Translation', 'English for foreign trade' (Gui loc. cit.). Of the 512 students of English as a major in Gui's survey, 50.4% hope that they will be working in departments of economics and foreign trade after graduation; 32.9% hope to become interpreters (Gui op. cit.:6).

(2) The learners' learning styles. Although it is generally believed that Chinese learners prefer rote learning (see Section 5.4), Gui's findings tell a different story. 61.7% of the students of English advocate 'much exposure to the target language and natural absorption'; 27.4% are in favour of 'understanding the rules and, then, imitation'; only 5.6% believe in recitation. As to their attitudes to mistakes/errors in the learning process, 61.6% say that 'although [we are] not afraid of making mistakes, it is better to be careful'; 25.2% say that (a) they are 'not afraid to make mistakes', (b) they must 'speak as much as possible', and (c) practice makes perfect; 13.2% admit that they are 'afraid to make mistakes' and that they 'feel embarrassed

when their mistakes are noticed by others' (Gui op. cit.:7).

From Gui's findings, it can be seen that students' goals and expectations are revealed in their expressed preference for courses such as 'Translation' (both oral and written), 'Conversation', and 'English for business and foreign trade'. As to the learners' learning styles and attitudes to mistakes/errors, more than 60% prefer unconscious learning and fluency to memorisation and accuracy respectively.

### 5.9.3 Teachers

Questions concerned with the teachers include: their proficiency in the target language, their training and experience, their preferred teaching approach/ method and techniques/strategies, and their expectations of the language programme.

Liu and Wu (1989), Liu, Wu and Huang (1989), Liu and Shen (1990), Liu, Wu and Yu (1990) report a national sample survey of ELT in China's tertiary education. This large-scale survey began in 1988 and involved 29 universities/colleges/institutes with a total number of 3,765 English majors and 519 teachers of English. It focuses on 5 aspects of ELT in China: (a) the teachers; (b) the assessment of teaching; (c) tests of students' proficiency; (d) educational management; (e) the design of courses. In the following discussion Liu and others' findings will be summarised in relation to the teachers'

language proficiency, training and experience, their preferred teaching approach/method and techniques/strategies, and their expectations.

(1) The age structure: In Liu and Wu's (1989) survey, the 519 teachers of English are categorised into six age groups, as is shown in Table 5.4 below:

Table 5.4: Age structure of teachers

Age group	Percentage (97.51%)
60 & over	5.99
55 - 59	9.25
45 - 54	23.89
35 - 44	19.46
34 & under	38.92

(Source: Liu and Wu 1989:3)

The above table shows that almost half of the teachers are young (from the Chinese point of view), which may suggest that they are inexperienced in language teaching (also see Li 1989:1); equally, it may also mean that a large number of them are flexible and energetic and open to new ideas in the teaching process.

(2) The training of teachers. In Liu and Wu's (op. cit.) survey, it is revealed that only half of the 519 teachers of English received training between 1978 and 1988, as Table 5.5 shows:



Table 5.5: The training of teachers

Percentage	Place	Type of training
11.18%	Foreign [English-speaking?] countries	degree
18.30%	Foreign countries	non-degree
10.21	Other institutions in China	?
6.55%	Own institutions	?
-----		
49.90%	Received no training	

(Source: Liu and Wu 1989:4)

The table shows that even during the years (1978-1988) when China was practising the open-door policy, half of the teachers did not have any opportunity to receive further training, either at home or abroad.

(3) The teaching strategies. In Liu and Wu's (op. cit.) survey three different teaching strategies are evaluated: (a) elicitation focusing on training students' wisdom and ability, (b) explaining the profound and difficult in simple terms and in a logical way by using correct and vivid language, (c) attaching importance to object teaching (e.g., by using audio-visual aids, the blackboard, diagrams and charts, and sign/body language). Perhaps it can be assumed that these three are among the commonest strategies/techniques in ELT in China.

(4) Teachers' expectations. In Liu and Wu's (op. cit.) survey, when the teacher-respondents are asked the question 'What do you think the problem concerning ELT is that needs to be solved most urgently?', 49.13% believe that the most urgent problem to be solved is 'to raise

teachers' professional qualities and skills'. A similar question (What is your most-urgently-needed-to-be-solved problem?) is asked, and the responses to the question show that 45.00% of the teachers think that it is the 'professional training and renewal of knowledge' that is the problem. Although the former question concerns the general problem of ELT whereas the latter relates to the teachers' 'personal' problems, the expectations are the same. This may show that teachers have realised that the success of ELT is closely related to teachers' knowledge of the language, their language proficiency and teaching methodology. This may indicate that teacher-training is one of the most important issues in the present Chinese ELT reform movement (see Section 5.7.3 above).

#### 5.9.4 Administration

In Liu, Wu and Huang (1989), the administrative context of ELT in China is reviewed. They focus on (a) the unit/credit system, (b) the test and assessment, (c) the system of 'assignment of jobs for students' on graduation <sup>15</sup>, and (d) teaching evaluation. Their survey shows that there are many factors in the administration and assessment of a language programme. And there are many constraints too, some of which will be discussed in the following section.

#### 5.9.5 Constraints and Problems

The surveys conducted by Gui (1986), Liu and Wu

(1989), Liu, Wu and Huang (1989), Liu and Shen (1990), and Liu, Wu and Yu (1990) show that there are many constraints and problems in ELT in the Chinese context; some of them will be briefly discussed below.

(1) Learner's goals and expectations. As else where, it is often the case that learners' goals are not achieved and expectations not met, because (a) students are required to learn what is being taught, (b) what they learn at the university may not be what is needed in their work after graduation; (c) better achievements in the studies do not guarantee or mean better jobs, (d) their expectations may not be met due to the given teaching situations. Therefore, a reliable target-needs analysis may not be conducted easily. For the proposed course, learners' needs will be understood as their needs to learn to use structures appropriate for the communicative encounters required in their learning process. This interpretation of the needs is more objective-oriented rather than aim-oriented.

(2) The training of teachers. As is revealed in Liu and Wu (1989), half of the teachers of English have not had any chance to receive further training for the past ten years, and very few have had the opportunity to study in an English-speaking country. Besides, there are many teachers who are not willing to work as teachers. Some are trying hard to go [to study?] abroad, others are trying to be transferred to 'non-educational' departments and units such as foreign trade companies, where they are

well-paid. Most of those who study abroad do not return to China as planned (Liu and Wu 1989:3). For those who have had the chance to have further training, the kind of training they receive is usually the improvement of their language proficiency rather than aspects of teaching methodology, classroom observation, materials trial, development and evaluation (Maley 1983/1986:103).

(3) Teaching methods and learning styles. Since many teachers do not have any opportunity to receive further training, what they can give in class is often what they were offered during their studies at the university. Because their proficiency is not very high, the safest way is teacher-centred, teaching-centred, textbook-centred, and grammar-centred (see Section 5.4). As for the learners' learning styles, students often have to memorise and recite because (a) they are taught to do so, (b) the course is organised that way, and/or (c) there are few teaching aids (e.g., videos, films, reference books) available (see Section 5.4). Liu and Wu (1989:10) express the regret that even now university students are reciting/memorising textbooks every day.

(4) Teaching materials. As was pointed out earlier (e.g., Section 5.4), teachers and students in China are in favour of the textbook-centred strategy, which means that course books are necessary in any language teaching programme. Teachers prefer to use course books which are accompanied with 'teacher's handbooks' where background information, answers to the exercises, and teaching

procedures are clearly presented and described. One of the reasons that the CECL core course has not gained popularity in China, I would assume after consulting teachers of English who have experience in using the CECL course book, is that the teacher's handbooks (i.e., the Teacher's Handbooks in Li et al 1987-1989) do not provide enough information (e.g., background knowledge of the passages and texts, answers to questions/tasks). The fact that reference grammar books are often used as grammar course books in China (Huang 1991b, also see Section 5.6.2.5 above) shows that the textbook-centred and teacher-centred approach is still popular. The fact that Xu's English (Xu 1979) and Alexander's New Concept English (1967) <sup>16</sup>, both of which are structure-based, have been the most popular textbooks in China for the past ten to fifteen years reveals that materials which are structure-based and which have complete teacher's handbooks are preferred.

#### 5.9.6 Concluding Remarks

From the situation analysis one might conclude that a communicative approach to ELT in China is not feasible. However, as was argued in Section 5.7.1 above, when the conditions for the adoption/implementation of a certain new approach/method in one area are not ripe, it does not mean that the same is true of another area because China is such a big country that conditions vary from one place to another. Therefore, instead of making false

generalisations, one must consider the conditions and constraints of adopting/implementing a programme by looking at the particular teaching situation involved. As will be indicated in Chapter 6, the result of my survey shows that a communicative approach to ELT is desirable and feasible in the Chinese ELT context, at least at GIFL.

#### 5.10 Arguments for a Chinese Approach to CLT

It has been widely accepted that the aim of ELT in China is not only to enable students to learn the knowledge but also the skills involved in communication (e.g., see CNESSTE 1989). In other words, English is not taught/learned as a system of structures, but a system of meanings. To learn the forms is to acquire the meanings they express in use. The aim of learning English is to become competent in communication. In CNESSTE it is clearly stated that one of the objectives is to enable students to use language in communication (CNESSTE 1989:4, 8); it is also emphasised that students should be provided with opportunities to use language in communication (op. cit.:12). The existing teaching methods and strategies/techniques need to be modified in one way or another for three basic reasons. Firstly, from a pedagogical perspective, a communicative view of language is more attractive and desirable. It is only when language is seen as a tool of communication that the teaching and learning is directed to functional,

communicative and interactive purposes. Secondly, from a sociological point of view, China urgently needs graduates who are competent in daily communication, not people who are good at linguistic analysis. Therefore, what students learn at the university should relate to their future work. Lastly, from a psychological point of view, most students and many teachers are not happy with the existing methods and strategies/techniques. The surveys conducted by Gui, and Liu and his colleagues (as indicated in Sections 5.9.2, 5.9.3, and 5.9.5 above) suggest that students and teachers are likely to be receptive to a communicative approach.

In order to see whether a communicative approach to ELT would be in fact more desirable to 'consumers' in the Chinese context, I conducted a survey, the result of which will be reported and analysed in the following chapter. As we shall see, the general finding of the survey is that a communicative approach is feasible and appropriate in ELT in the Chinese context, at least at GIFL, in the view of students and teachers .

### 5.11 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter first looked at the history of TEFL in the Chinese context and the national syllabus for English majors. Then the existing teaching methods/strategies, learning styles, and the practice of classroom teaching were reviewed. After that, the discussion moved to the teaching of English grammar in the Chinese classroom.



This was followed by a review of reactions to CLT in China. Then a Chinese approach to CLT was discussed and compared with the traditional Chinese approach. Finally, the present ELT situation in China was reviewed and it was argued that the existing teaching methods/strategies should be modified. The chapter concluded with the argument that a communicative approach to ELT in certain part of China is desirable and feasible.

The following chapter will first discuss the design of a survey of GIFL students' and teachers' perceptions, attitudes, reactions with regard to ELT in general and grammar teaching in particular, and then report and analyse the result, the implications from which will help argue for the design of the proposed course.

## CHAPTER 6: THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN CHINA: -- A SURVEY

### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter some issues of TEFL in the Chinese context and a Chinese approach to CLT were looked at. This chapter will discuss the design of a survey of the teaching of English in China and report the results. This survey was carried out at GIFL in order to find out teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions to ELT in general and the teaching and learning of grammar in particular. This chapter will begin with the design and administration of the survey.<sup>1</sup> Then it will go on to discuss the results in relation to some general issues in ELT, CLT, and the CECL core course book. Finally, it will turn to the results which concern the teaching and learning of English grammar.

### 6.2 Purpose of the Study and the Underlying Beliefs

The main purpose of this study is to find out GIFL teachers' and students' perceptions of, attitudes and reactions to ELT in the Chinese context. It is hoped that the findings of this survey will (a) indicate both teachers' and students' attitudes to the teaching and learning of English in general, and grammar teaching and learning in particular, in the university in China, (b) support my argument for the design of a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners at tertiary level, (c) show the desirability, feasibility, and

applicability of a communicative English grammar course, and (d) carry implications for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed grammar course.

The following were my personal beliefs when the survey was being designed:

1. Respondents would express the belief that grammar is important in the university programme.
2. Respondents would prefer a communicative approach to a traditional approach to the teaching of grammar.
3. The responses from the respondents would suggest that a communicative approach to the teaching of grammar is desirable and appropriate in the Chinese ELT context.
4. The students' responses would not be the same as those of the teachers.

### 6.3 Subjects

There were altogether 340 subjects who completed the questionnaires; they were English majors and staff at the Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages (GIFL) where students attend a four-year degree course. They comprised four groups: Group 1: 107 first-year students who started their studies at GIFL in September 1989; Group 2: 109 second-year students who started their studies in September 1988, and Group 3: 81 third-year students who started their course in September 1987. The

students in these three groups come from different parts of China and have different levels of English proficiency. The average age of these students was about 20 at the time of the survey. The reason for having three different groups is simply this: At present, a grammar [morphology and syntax] course is given to the second-year English majors at GIFL. When the students in the three groups were asked to answer the questions in the survey at the end of June 1990, Group 1 had been studying at GIFL for about one year but had not been given a grammar course in their studies in the university; Group 2 had just finished the grammar course, which was taught in a traditional way (i.e., with a traditional and/or structural course book and methodology), and Group 3 were given the same grammar course one year earlier. However, when compared with the teacher group, these three groups are taken as one student group.

The subjects in Group 4 were Chinese teachers of English at GIFL, whose knowledge of English, experience of ELT, academic positions, and attitudes to and familiarity with various kinds of teaching methods/strategies/techniques, etc. differ in one way or another. Therefore, some questions requiring biographical information from the teacher-respondents were included in the questionnaire. The relationship between the subjects in Group 4 and those in Groups 1-3 is a teacher-student one.

The main reason for doing the experiment at GIFL was that the proposed grammar course, which is to be a CECL sub-course, will be first applied at GIFL.

#### 6.4 The Instrument of the Survey -- the Questionnaires

##### 6.4.1 Introduction

The main instrument of the survey comprised two questionnaires (see Appendix 4), one (i.e., Questionnaire A -- henceforth QA) for the students in Groups 1-3, the other (Questionnaire B -- henceforth QB) for the teachers in Group 4.

##### 6.4.2 The Design of the Questionnaire

Every effort was made to ensure that there was no tendency in the questionnaire to influence respondents to answer in the way the researcher would want them to respond. When designing the questionnaires, the following points were taken into careful consideration:

1. The order of questions. General and easy-to-answer questions were asked first, and this reflects the respondent-friendliness of the questionnaire. Questions concerning the profile of the respondents were not placed at the beginning of the questionnaire so that the responses would be more valid. Respondents might otherwise have been apprehensive about answering the questions.

2. The formats and types of questions. Every effort was made to ensure that the layout was respondent-friendly and easy to understand. The choice of format and the type of question largely depended on the nature of the questions. There were five types and formats: (1) binary choice -- Yes/No; (2) binary choice + open slot; (3) scale; (4) scale + open slot; (5) open-ended.

3. The questions and instructions. The instructions and the questions were written in Chinese (see Section 3, Appendix 4) so that there would be no misunderstanding of the questions and the respondents had no linguistic difficulty in giving comments.

4. The anonymity and the validity of the answers. In order to ensure that the respondents would say what they wanted to say when answering the questions, it was stated clearly at the beginning of the questionnaire that the responses would be regarded as confidential and that respondents were requested not to write their names on the questionnaire.

5. Areas to be investigated. The questions in both QA and QB can be grouped under two headings: (1) ELT in general; (2) the teaching and learning of grammar.

6. The differences between QA and QB. There were altogether 19 questions in QA, 18 of which (i.e., except Question 12) were also asked in QB. The content of some of these 18 questions in QA was slightly different from those in QB, as the former was for students and the latter for teachers. For example, 'How often do you

memorise grammatical rules?' in QA (Question 5) became 'How often do you ask your students to memorise grammatical rules?' in QB (Question 5). Other questions in both QA and QB were exactly the same (e.g., Questions 17-19 in QA and Questions 24-26 in QB). However, there were 8 other questions in QB that were not asked in QA, and these were concerned with whether the respondent had taught the CECL core course (Question 14), his attitude to the inclusion of a grammar course which was to complement the CECL core course (Question 16), his understanding of the communicative approach (Question 17), and his profile (Questions 19-23).

Allan (1987) conducted an interesting survey on overseas students' attitudes to the teaching of grammar, which influenced the design of a number of items in the present survey.

#### 6.4.3 The Piloting of the Questionnaires

As one way of ensuring the validity of the questionnaire is to try it out before the data collection, both QA and QB were piloted in Edinburgh twice. They were first tried out in November 1989 with MSc students and some higher degree and research students in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh. Each respondent completed only one questionnaire, either QA or QB. Six were native speaker teachers of English and five were Chinese teachers of English.



After the first piloting, both questionnaires were revised and then were tried out again with 11 higher degree and research students (some of whom had been involved in the first piloting) in the Department in April 1990, of whom four were Chinese teachers of English.

#### 6.4.4 The Exercises in the Questionnaires

##### 6.4.4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the questions concerning the exercises was to find out how much teachers and students liked the different types of exercise. In selecting the exercises, their communicative or non-communicative features and their underlying methodology were carefully considered. It was believed that the seven exercises to be evaluated would represent different points on a 'structural-communicative' continuum. It was also assumed that the more communicative a grammar exercise is the more communicative features (see Section 2.5.2) it has, although it is unlikely that an exercise would illustrate all communicative features.

##### 6.4.4.2 The selection of the exercises

In both QA and QB three questions concerning seven exercises were asked and the respondents were required to decide how much they liked each of the exercises. The first three exercises (1, 2, and 3 -- QA17, QB24) to be

compared were designed to practise Wh-questions (usually called 'special questions' in China). Exercise 2 was taken from Zhang (1981:155-6)<sup>2</sup>; Exercise 1 was of my own design and Exercise 3 was adapted from Adamson and Cobb (1987:13). According to my analysis (see the following two sections), of all the three exercises to be compared, Exercise 1 is the most communicative and Exercise 2 is the least communicative.

The second pair of exercises (4 and 5 -- QA18, QB25) to be compared were designed to practise the BECAUSE-clause. Exercise 4 was taken from Zhang (1981:204), and Exercise 5 was one I designed myself. It seems to me that Exercise 4 is very mechanical; Exercise 5 was intended to be an improvement, which is more communication-based and has more communicative features.

The last pair of exercises (6 and 7 -- QA19, QB26) to be compared were designed to practise comparison of adjectives. Exercise 6 was adapted from Jones (1985:36); Exercise 7 was abridged from Zhang et al (1983:298). Exercise 6 was believed to have more communicative features and to be, therefore, more communicative than 7.

#### 6.4.4.3 An analysis of the exercises

In Section 2.5.2, 'communicative features' were defined and discussed. Generally speaking, the more of these features an exercise has, the more communicative it is likely to be. However, it is rare for any exercise to display all the communicative features, so that, strictly

speaking, exercises cannot be regarded as either communicative or non-communicative but are on a 'communicative-structural' continuum with gradients in between: quasi-communicative and semi-communicative. Therefore, it may be better to talk about exercises representing different degrees of communicativeness and non-communicativeness.

It must be pointed out that, strictly speaking, most of the communicative features do not reside in the exercises themselves but depend on people's responses to them. Therefore, in the following analysis, what is discussed is the potential feature(s) of the exercise and the intention behind it. Whether an exercise has certain features depends on individual perceptions and responses.

Exercise 1 has features such as 'learning-centred', 'task-based', 'interesting', 'motivating', 'creative', 'integrative', 'appropriate', 'meaning-focused', 'contextualised', and 'personalised' because (a) it is presented as a task, (b) the background of the task is of intrinsic interest to learners, and (c) learners are not required to achieve the same results but make their own choices in terms of language forms and content. This exercise may have features such as 'goal-directed' (if learners wish to ask the right questions in such context), 'challenging' (if learners have to think very carefully what kind of question is more culturally appropriate), 'meaningful' and 'authentic' (if learners consider it 'an approximation to authentic language

behaviour' (Widdowson 1990:131) to do the exercise), and 'choice-free' (because learners can choose to ask between 7 and 10 questions).

Exercise 2 is a typical grammar exercise type in books published in China. It has only one feature, which is 'challenging' because it may be difficult for learners. From my experience I would say that it is not easy for second-year university students to ask Wh-questions (based on the underlined phrases) to which 'I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon' and 'My uncle is a rather queer little old man' are answers.

Exercise 3 is 'goal-directed', 'learning-centred', 'task-based', 'authentic', 'appropriate', and 'contextualised' because it requires learners to 'rehearse' a possible future role. It may be 'meaningful', 'interesting' and 'motivating' if learners hope to be interpreters. It may also be 'meaning-focused' if learners pay attention to the content rather than the form. However, this exercise is not 'challenging' nor 'creative', 'integrative', 'choice-free', 'personalised' because the key words and phrases are provided and the questions to be asked are based on these words/phrases.

Exercise 4 has none of the communicative features. It is more structural and mechanical than Exercise 2 because all learners have to do is change the subordinator 'that' into 'because'.

Exercise 5 is 'learning-centred', 'task-based',

'meaningful', 'authentic', 'creative', 'integrative', 'appropriate', 'contextualised', 'meaning-focused', 'choice-free', and 'personalised' because it presents a list of 'pre-interview' questions and because the questions addressed to students reflect the assumption that students should be treated as human beings in the real world, not as learners in an artificial language classroom. It may be 'goal-directed' (if learners see it as a way of letting someone know themselves), 'challenging' (if the questions are difficult to answer), and 'interesting' and 'motivating' (if learners enjoy talking about themselves).

Exercise 6 is 'meaning-focused', 'choice-free', and 'personalised' because it requires learners to express their own opinions. It may be 'learning-centred', 'meaningful' and 'authentic' (because learners may take it as an opportunity to share their ideas and opinions), 'interesting' and 'motivating' (if learners like to exchange opinions), and 'creative', 'integrative', 'appropriate' and 'contextualised' (if learners make good use of the opportunity to express themselves). However, it does not have features such as 'goal-directed' or 'task-based' (because there is no clear aim in doing the exercise), 'challenging' (because learners can simply follow the examples by substituting the key words).

Exercise 7, like Exercise 2, has only one feature, which is 'challenging'. This exercise is less mechanical and manipulative than Exercise 2.

Table 6.1 below provides a comparative summary of the exercises in the questionnaire in terms of their communicative features<sup>3</sup>.

Table 6.1: Communicative features of the exercises

Exercises Features	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
appropriate	v	x	v	x	v	?	x
authentic	?	x	v	x	v	?	x
challenging	?	v	x	x	?	x	v
choice-free	?	x	x	x	v	v	x
contextualised	v	x	v	x	v	?	x
creative	v	x	x	x	v	?	x
goal-directed	?	x	v	x	?	x	x
integrative	v	x	x	x	v	?	x
interesting	v	x	?	x	?	?	x
learning-centred	v	x	v	x	v	?	x
meaning-focused	v	x	?	x	v	v	x
meaningful	?	x	?	x	v	?	x
motivating	v	x	?	x	?	?	x
personalised	v	x	x	x	v	v	x
task-based	v	x	v	x	v	x	x
Total score	25	2	16	0	26	15	2

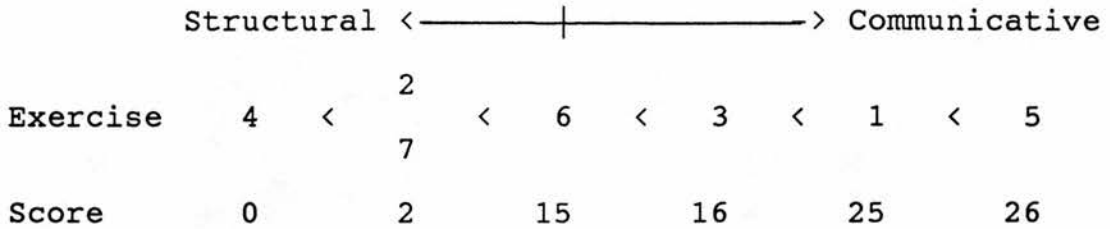
Coding symbol: v = yes, ? = maybe, x = no

Coding score: v = 2, ? = 1, x = 0

Considering the seven exercises in terms of their communicative features and according to the scores, the exercises may be ranged along a structural-communicative

continuum and be diagrammatically presented as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Figure 6.1: Exercises on a structural-communicative continuum



The figure indicates that Exercises 4, 2, and 7 are structure-oriented and 5, 1, 3, and 6 are communication-oriented. Here the distinction is deliberately made, because the structure-oriented exercises barely have any communicative features. My ranking on the communicative scale, to a large extent, was confirmed by other Chinese teachers of English as well as native-speaker teachers of English (see Section 6.4.4.4 below).

The principal differences between the communicative and non-communicative exercises depend not only on how many features they have but also on: (a) the nature of the exercise, (b) exercise type, (c) classroom grouping and activity, (d) the way the exercise is presented, and (e) procedure. The communicative exercises were presented as tasks; they were contextualised or situationalised and personalised rather than de-contextualised and manipulative or mechanical. All of them could be regarded as heterogeneously-oriented (i.e., students were not required to produce exactly the same



thing.)). Three of the communicative exercises involved pair-/group-work; and the underlying classroom methodology was learning-centred.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this section, communicative features are not qualities of exercises themselves but are reflections of people's responses to them. Therefore, it may be true that there are no two persons who would agree completely with each other on the number of communicative features in the same exercise. In order to minimise the subjectivity in grouping the exercises, a group of Chinese ELT trainees and a group of native-speaker ELT professionals were asked to define the communicative features of the exercises, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### 6.4.4.4 Defining the exercise types

In the previous section the exercises were ranged along the structural-communicative continuum according to my own analysis. In order to test my hypothetical pattern and validate the classification of the exercises, nine other Chinese teachers of English (who had completed an MA/MSc course in applied linguistics/ELT in three British universities -- Birmingham, Edinburgh, Strathclyde -- and who were ELT teachers at tertiary institutions in China before they came to Britain) and eight native-speaker teachers of English and/or applied linguists (who were working in the Department of Applied Linguistics and/or the Institute of Applied Language

Studies, University of Edinburgh) were asked to help define the exercise types by completing a questionnaire, in which they were given a list of communicative features and their definitions, the seven exercises, and a coding form (see Appendix 5). The reasons for having these two types of subject are: the Chinese ELT trainees were familiar with ELT at tertiary level in China and had received formal training in applied linguistics and ELT in Britain, while the native-speaker teachers of English are ELT professionals who have experience in teaching English as a second/foreign language.

The completed questionnaires were analysed by using Friedman's two-way analysis of variance test.<sup>5</sup> The following is the result from the Chinese ELT trainees' responses (value of Friedman's statistic  $Fr = 41.38$ , which is highly significant --  $p < 0.0001$ , indicating that there is a high degree of agreement among the judges), which confirms my own judgement, as can be seen from the following table.

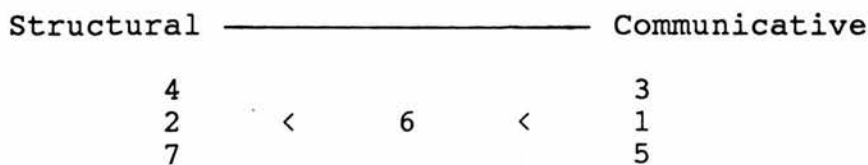
Table 6.2: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of the exercises (trainees)

Exercise	5	1	3	6	7	2	4
Rank sum	55.0	54.5	50.5	33.5	20.5	19.0	19.0
5	0.0	0.5	4.5	21.5	34.5**	36.0**	36.0**
1		0.0	4.0	21.0	34.0**	35.5**	35.5**
3			0.0	17.0	30.0**	31.5**	31.5**
6				0.0	13.0	14.5	14.5
7					0.0	1.5	1.5
2						0.0	0.0
4							0.0

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The table shows that the exercises fall into three groups: Exercises 4, 2 and 7 make up one group, 5, 1, and 3 form another group, and Exercise 6 stands in between, with 5, and 1 and 3 significantly different from 4, 2 and 7. The rank sum differences of Exercises 5, 1 and 3 on the one hand and those of 4, 2 and 7 on the other show that there is little or no difference between the three exercises in either group. The grouping of the seven exercises can be represented as follows:

Figure 6.2: The grouping of the exercises  
(trainees)



The result from the native-speaker group is similar to that from the Chinese ELT trainee group. The following is the matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of the exercises for the native-speaker group (value of Friedman's statistic  $Fr = 42.70$ , which is highly significant --  $p < 0.0001$ , indicating that there is a high degree of agreement among the judges):

Table 6.3: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of the exercises (native speaker teachers)

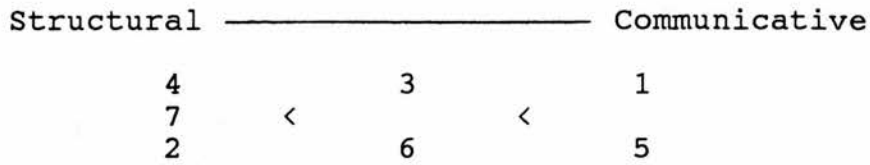
Exercise	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
Rank sum	53.0	50.5	37.5	34.5	19.0	17.0	12.5
5	0.0	2.5	15.5	18.5	34.0**	36.0**	40.5**
1		0.0	13.0	16.0	31.5**	33.5**	38.0**
6			0.0	3.0	18.5	20.5	25.0*
3				0.0	15.5	17.5	22.0
2					0.0	2.0	6.5
7						0.0	4.5
4							0.0

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 6.3 indicates that for the native-speaker group the exercises belong to three groups: Exercises 5 and 1 are significantly different from Exercises 2, 7 and 4, with 6 and 3 in between. In other words, respondents regard Exercises 5 and 1 as the most communicative and 2, 7 and 4 as the least communicative, as is shown in Figure 6.3

below:

Figure 6.3: The grouping of the exercises  
(native speaker teachers)



In order to see whether there is any significant difference between the ratings by the Chinese ELT trainees and those by the native-speaker ELT professionals, a Student-Newman-Keuls multiple range test (95% confidence level) was used, which shows the following natural groupings of the exercises:

Table 6.4: Natural groupings of the exercises

Rater	Exercise	Mean	Grouping
NS	4	1.75	]
NNS	4	2.22	
NNS	2	2.33	
NS	7	2.38	
NNS	7	2.44	
NS	2	2.50	]
NNS	6	3.78	
NS	3	4.38	]
NS	6	4.75	
NNS	3	5.89	]
NNS	1	6.11	
NS	1	6.25	
NNS	5	6.33	
NS	5	6.63	

NS = Native speakers; NNS = Non-native speakers

Table 6.4 shows that Exercises 4, 2, and 7 belong to one group and that Exercises 1 and 5 form another group. Although the native-speaker group and the Chinese ELT trainee group rated Exercise 6 differently, as is shown in the natural grouping, the Tukey Studentised Range

Method (95% confidence intervals) does not show any significant difference. It is of interest to note that Exercise 3 was rated significantly higher by the Chinese ELT trainees than the rating given by the native speakers, as is shown in the Tukey Studentised Range Method. The reason for this may be that the content and the role of the task performer are more appealing to Chinese respondents than to native speakers (see Section 6.6.2.3.3 below). The result of the statistic tests, to a large extent, confirms the groupings of the exercises by both groups of judges, as indicated in Figures 6.2 and 6.3 above.

The ratings given to the exercises by both the Chinese ELT trainees and the native-speaker professionals, to a large extent, match my analysis and hypothetical pattern discussed earlier (see Section 6.4.4.3). However, the groupings, shown in Figures 6.2 and 6.3, slightly differ from the author's hypothetical pattern:

Figure 6.4: Hypothetical pattern of the exercises

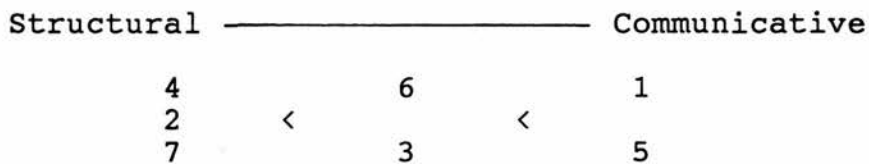


Figure 6.2 differs from 6.4 in that Exercise 3 is regarded as more communicative than 6 by the MA/MSc trainees whereas it is treated by myself as having more or less the same degree of communicativeness as Exercise 6 (i.e., less communicative than either Exercise 1 or 5).

The reason for treating Exercise 3 as 'quasi-communicative' and grouping it with Exercise 6 rather than 1 and 5 in Figure 6.4 was based on a close analysis of the features of the exercises (see Section 6.4.4.3 above).

The grouping of the exercises by the native-speaker group is more or less the same as my hypothetical pattern; the differences are not significant and they are within groups: in Figure 6.3 Exercise 2 is less structural than 7 while in 6.4 it is the other way round; similarly, Exercise 6 is more communicative than 3 in Figure 6.3 whereas in 6.4 it is less communicative than 3.

To conclude, the author's analysis of the exercises and the hypothetical grouping of them are supported by the result of the responses from the Chinese ELT trainees as well as the native ELT professionals.

## 6.5 The Administration of the Questionnaires

The two questionnaires (i.e., QA and QB) were finalised in May 1990 and were then translated into Chinese and were checked and proofread by another Chinese teacher of English. After that, the Chinese versions of the two questionnaires were informally piloted on two Chinese students of science and technology who were then studying in Edinburgh, to see whether the translation was well-understood. The two Chinese versions, together with instructions on the step-by-step procedures of data



collection, were sent to GIFL, China at the end of May, where they were then typed and printed. At the same time I wrote to the Dean and the Head of the English Department at GIFL, asking them to facilitate the data collection. The questionnaires were completed in July 1990. The number of the questionnaires distributed and completed is shown in the following table:

Table 6.5: Number of questionnaires received

Group	Questionnaire						Total valid
	Distributed		Sent back		Incomplete		
	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	
1	130	--	121	--	14	--	107
2	130	--	125	--	16	--	109
3	130	--	102	--	21	--	81
4	--	65	--	44	--	1	43

Total valid: QA 297, QB 43.

## 6.6 Results and Discussion

This section will report the results and discuss the findings of the survey. The presentation will be divided into two main parts: (1) ELT in general; (2) the teaching and learning of English grammar.

### 6.6.1 ELT in General

In this section, results concerning the following issues will be reported and analysed: (a) the importance

of different courses, (b) the best ways to learn English, (c) classroom groupings and activities, and (d) attitudes to a Chinese approach to CLT.

#### 6.6.1.1 The importance of different courses

Respondents from both categories were asked (QA1, QB1) to indicate on a five-point scale ( 1 = least important, 5 = most important) how important some of the courses in a Chinese university programme were. The t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in the mean ratings given by students and teachers, with the results shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Importance of different courses (QA1, QB1)

Course	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
a. listening	4.65	0.87	4.51	0.74	0.99	0.3218
b. speaking	4.55	0.84	4.05	0.84	3.65	0.0003***
c. intensive R	3.77	1.12	4.40	0.95	3.45	0.0006***
d. extensive R	3.56	1.15	4.02	1.06	2.52	0.0123*
e. writing	3.95	0.96	4.02	0.94	0.49	0.6222
f. phonetics	3.55	1.25	3.37	1.07	0.88	0.3783
g. grammar	3.42	1.07	3.28	0.93	0.85	0.3977
h. vocabulary	3.41	1.22	3.35	0.92	0.34	0.7355
i. translation	3.84	1.06	3.53	1.03	1.76	0.7990

SD = Standard deviation; R = reading;

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

In order to see the degree of relationship between the students' and teachers' ratings, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used:  $d.f. = 7$ ,  $r = 0.698$ , and  $p = 0.037$ , indicating that there is a fairly high correlation between the ratings of both students and teachers.

In order to estimate whether the degree of consensus among the judges was significantly different from what could be expected by chance, pair-wise comparisons of the rank sum differences from Friedman's ANOVA were evaluated for significance. The following is the matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums for the student group:

Table 6.7: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of courses (QA1)

	a	b	e	i	c	f	d	h	g
RS	2088.5	1996.0	1526.5	1449.0	1416.0	1284.0	1271.5	1173.5	1160.0
a	0.0	92.5	562.0**	639.5**	672.5**	804.5**	817.0**	915.0**	928.5**
b		0.0	469.5**	547.0**	580.0**	712.0**	724.5**	822.5**	836.0**
e			0.0	77.5	110.5	242.5**	255.0**	353.0**	366.5**
i				0.0	33.0	165.0	177.5	275.5**	289.0**
c					0.0	132.0	144.5	242.5**	256.0**
f						0.0	12.5	110.5	124.0
d							0.0	98.0	111.5
h								0.0	13.5
g									0.0

RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The value of Friedman's statistics  $F_r$  is 74.53, which is highly significant ( $p < 0.0001$ ), indicating that there is a high degree of agreement among the judges/respondents). The rank order of the rank sums for the student group is as follows:

Table 6.8: Students' preference for different courses (QA1)

Rank order	Course	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	a. listening	2080.5	7.03
2	b. speaking	1996.0	6.72
3	e. writing	1526.5	5.14
4	i. translation	1449.0	4.88
5	c. intensive reading	1416.0	4.77
6	f. phonetics	1284.0	4.32
7	d. extensive reading	1271.5	4.28
8	h. vocabulary	1173.5	3.95
9	g. grammar	1160.0	3.91

Both Tables 6.7 and 6.8 indicate that for students the most important courses are listening, speaking and writing while the least favoured ones are grammar and vocabulary. Pair-wise comparisons of rank sums also show the preference for oral language skills (e.g., listening and speaking) over knowledge of the language (e.g., grammar and vocabulary). Listening and speaking were rated significantly more important than the other courses. As the value of pair-wise comparisons is that

it enables one to discern groupings in rank order, the students' ratings of the courses can be represented as follows:

Figure 6.5: The grouping of the courses for students' rating (QA1)

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & & i & f \\
 & & & & & c & d \\
 & & & & & & h \\
 a & > & b & > & e & > & g
 \end{array}$$

Having looked at the students' ratings, I now turn to the teachers' reactions. The following is the pairwise comparison of rank sums from Friedman's ANOVA for the teacher group:

Table 6.9: Matrix for display of pairwise comparisons of rank sums of courses (QB1)

	a	c	b	e	d	i	f	h	g
RS	292.0	282.5	244.0	235.5	235.0	178.0	162.0	156.5	149.5
a	0.0	9.5	48.0	56.5	57.0	114.0**	130.0**	135.5**	142.5**
c		0.0	38.5	47.0	47.5	104.5**	120.5**	126.0**	133.0**
b			0.0	8.5	9.0	66.0	82.0**	87.5**	94.5**
e				0.0	0.5	57.5	73.5	79.0*	86.0**
d					0.0	57.0	73.0	78.5*	85.5**
i						0.0	16.0	21.5	28.5
f							0.0	5.5	12.5
h								0.0	7.0
g									0.0

RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

From the above table we can see that the courses fall into two groups, as is shown in the following:

Figure 6.6: The grouping of the courses for teachers' rating (QB1)

a		i
c		f
b	>	h
e		g
d		

This figure clearly shows that from the teachers' point of view there is no significant difference between Courses (a), (c), (b), (e) and (d) on the one hand and between (i), (f), (h) and (g) on the other hand, with the former group significantly different (important) from the latter. The rank order of rank sums in the Friedman's statistics for the teacher group is different from that of the student group.

Table 6.10: Teachers' preference for different courses (QB1)

Rank order	Course	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	a. listening	292.0	6.79
2	c. intensive reading	282.5	6.57
3	b. speaking	244.0	5.67
4	e. writing	235.5	5.48
5	d. extensive reading	235.0	5.47
6	i. translation	178.0	4.14
7	f. phonetics	162.0	3.77
8	h. vocabulary	156.5	3.64
9	g. grammar	149.5	3.48

If we compare the rank order for the teacher group with that for the student group, we can see that there are interesting differences between the two groups.

Table 6.11: A comparison of preferences (QA1, QB1)

Rank order	From teachers	From students
1	a. listening	a. listening
2	c. intensive reading	b. speaking
3	b. speaking	e. writing
4	e. writing	i. translation
5	d. extensive reading	c. intensive reading
6	i. translation	f. phonetics
7	f. phonetics	d. extensive reading
8	h. vocabulary	h. vocabulary
9	g. grammar	g. grammar

Both students and teachers regard listening as most important and grammar and vocabulary as least important. However, according to the students' ratings, speaking is significantly more important than intensive reading, whereas according to the teachers' reactions, there is no significant difference between intensive reading and speaking. Students' and teachers' preference for oral skills may suggest that in the teaching of grammar (and other courses) a certain amount of interactive activities be introduced. Grammar is not regarded as important as courses such as listening or speaking, because neither students nor teachers give it a high rating. The reason



for this may be that grammar teaching and learning has been very mechanical and boring. However, one may argue that grammar is regarded as important in the survey, considering its rating on a five-point scale.

As we saw in Section 5.1, the learning of English in China is conducted mainly in the classroom setting and natural exposure to the target language is limited. Therefore, it is not surprising that both teachers and students regard the courses in the university programme as important.

#### 6.6.1.2 The best ways to learn English

Question 2 in both QA and QB was designed to elicit respondents' opinions on the best ways to learn English in the Chinese context. Although the answers were open-ended, all of the respondents quoted the 'ways' provided in the example. Therefore, in the analysis of the result, the 'ways' in the example were used as headings. As for the 'ways' that were not in the example, they were coded according to key words given by the respondents. The results of the answers for both students and teachers are as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Table 6.12: The best ways to learn English (QA2, QB2)

Way to learn English	Students		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Reading English materials	223	75.08	35	81.40
Talking with people in English	212	71.38	26	69.00
Memorising words and grammar rules	88	29.63	18	41.86
Doing pattern drills	36	12.12	17	39.53
Listening to recordings and radios	242	81.48	34	79.07
Others which include	69	24.58	13	37.21
creating a natural environment	21	7.07	4	9.30
watching videos and films	16	5.39	2	4.65
reciting texts	8	2.69	3	6.98
writing letters and diaries	6	2.02	----	

f = Frequency

As can be seen from the above table, for both the students and the teachers, the best ways to learn English in China are: listening to English recordings and radios, reading English materials, and talking with people in English. This matches their ratings of courses such as listening, speaking and reading (see Table 6.6 above). A  $\chi^2$  test was carried out on the frequency distribution for teachers and students, and we can see from this that the distributions are significantly different ( $\chi^2 = 17.82$ , d.f. = 5,  $p < 0.01$ ). It is interesting to note that only 30% of the students think that memorising words and grammar rules is one of the best ways to learn

English. From the teachers' perspective, memorising words and grammar rules is more important in learning English, for 42% believed that it is one of the best ways. On the whole, for both categories of respondents memorisation is not a better way compared with ways such as reading English materials, talking with people in English, and listening to recordings and radios. Students' reaction (12%) to doing pattern drills may indicate that they do not like it very much, while for teachers (40%), it still has a role to play. Clearly, the students and the teachers have significantly different reactions to doing pattern drills ( $\chi^2 = 21.4526$ , d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The results shown in Table 6.12 above are similar to Gui's (1986) findings on students' attitudes to different learning strategies. Both Gui's (1986) survey and mine indicate that it is not true that students and teachers regard memorisation as the best way of learning English in China (cf. discussion in Section 5.3).

As students were asked to indicate on a six-point scale (1 = never, 6 = always) how often they memorised grammatical rules (QA5), the mean rating is 3.31. Since the mean rating is very near the middle of the range, we cannot draw any conclusions about their preference for memorisation from this result. When the teachers were asked to indicate on the scale how often they asked their students to memorise grammatical rules (QB5) their mean rating ( $\bar{X}=3.81$ ) is slightly higher than that of the

students.<sup>7</sup>

Related to memorisation are the attitudes to fluency and accuracy (QA10, QB10). 92% of the students say that being able to speak English fluently with some grammatical mistakes is more important than being able to speak English slowly without grammatical mistakes. The teachers' responses are similar to the students': 88% believe that fluency is more important than accuracy. The observed value of  $\chi^2$  is 0.2364 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.05$ ), which indicates that there is no significant difference between the two groups in their preferences.

Also related to memorisation and fluency/accuracy are the reactions to grammatical mistakes (errors). The students were asked how they felt when they made grammatical mistakes in their speaking and writing (QA11) while the teachers were asked to say how they thought their students felt about making grammatical mistakes in their speaking and writing (QB11). The following is the result:

Table 6.13: Attitudes to grammatical mistakes  
(QA11, QB11)

Reaction	Students				Teachers			
	Speaking		Writing		Speaking		Writing	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
afraid	15	5.05	33	11.11	9	20.93	4	9.30
nervous	84	28.28	50	16.84	18	41.86	11	25.58
embarrassed	112	37.71	81	27.27	32	74.42	22	51.16
others	134	45.12	157	52.86	9	20.93	10	23.26

f = Frequency

As the above table shows, the teachers' ratings on students' different reactions to grammatical mistakes are, generally speaking, higher than students' own ratings. The distribution of the students' responses is significantly different from that of the teachers, for the observed value of  $\chi^2$  for speaking is 22.05 (d.f. = 3,  $p < 0.01$ ) and that for writing is 15.36 (d.f. = 3,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, we can say that students and teachers have significantly different reactions. It seems that teachers regard students' grammatical mistakes as more serious than students do themselves, which is consistent with the teachers' and students' different attitudes to memorising grammatical rules and doing pattern drills, discussed at the beginning of this section. Students' other reactions (Speaking: 45%; Writing: 53%) to making grammatical mistakes include: (a) feeling that it is a

natural phenomenon; (b) finding out why the mistake was made; (c) trying to avoid the same mistakes later; (d) not knowing what mistakes were made. The frequency and the percentage are shown in the following table:

Table 6.14: Students' other reactions to mistakes (QA11)

Reaction	Speaking		Writing	
	f	%	f	%
a. natural phenomenon	46	15.49	20	6.73
b. how mistake made	42	14.14	61	20.54
c. avoiding later	39	13.13	50	16.84
d. not knowing why	5	1.68	22	7.41

f = Frequency

By contrast, among the teachers' other observations of students' reactions are: (a) promising to be more careful later; (b) hoping they will be helped to avoid making the same mistakes later; (c) feeling it is a natural phenomenon; (d) promising to memorise the rule(s). The following is the frequency and percentage of the teachers' other observations.

Table 6.15: Teachers' other observations of students' reactions to mistakes (QB11)

Observation	Speaking		Writing	
	f	%	f	%
a. careful later	5	11.63	5	11.63
b. seeking help	3	6.98	3	6.98
c. natural phenomenon	1	2.33	--	----
d. memorising rule(s)	--	----	2	4.65

f = Frequency

As was shown in Section 5.4, it has been claimed that Chinese students and teachers like memorisation and prefer accuracy to fluency (e.g., Scovel 1983; Maley 1983/1986; Tang 1984; Ting 1987; Malcolm and Malcolm 1988). However, the present study tells a different story, confirming Gui's (1986) survey, which supports the argument that discussion based on secondary research (Brown 1988:1-2) (i.e., based on sources one step removed from the original information) is not always reliable.

#### 6.6.1.3 Classroom groupings and activities

The usual classroom grouping in ELT in China is either individual work or whole-class work. In order to see whether students and teachers like classroom groupings which are likely to encourage interactions among students, one question (QA13, QB12) was included to elicit attitudes to different groupings. Respondents



were asked to indicate on a six-point scale how much they liked each of four types of classroom groupings. The result is as follows:

Table 6.16: Preference for classroom groupings  
(QA13, QB12)

Grouping	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
a.individual W	3.15	1.37	2.95	1.15	0.92	0.3607
b.pairwork	4.49	1.14	4.56	0.93	0.35	0.7281
c.group W	4.08	1.32	4.79	0.97	3.40	0.0008***
d.whole-class W	3.57	1.62	3.28	1.26	1.11	0.2659

W = work; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The above table indicates that teachers show a highly significant preference for group work. The difference between the two groups can best be seen from the Friedman's statistic pair-wise comparisons of rank sums for both the student group and the teacher group.

Table 6.17: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of groupings (QA13)

	b	c	d	a
Rank sum	906.5	806.0	665.5	592.0
b	0.0	100.5**	241.0**	314.5**
c		0.0	140.5**	214.0**
d			0.0	73.5
a				0.0

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The above matrix shows that students prefer pairwork to the other three kinds of classroom grouping and that group work is more favoured than whole-class work and individual work. By contrast, the teachers show no significant difference between group work and pairwork, both of which are significantly preferred to whole-class work and individual work, as is shown below:

Table 6.18: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of groupings (QB12)

	c	b	d	a
Rank sum	140.0	131.0	83.0	76.0
c	0.0	9.0	57.0**	64.0**
b		0.0	48.0**	55.0**
d			0.0	7.0
a				0.0

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Having looked at the pair-wise comparisons of rank sums for both students and teachers, I now turn to the rank order of rank sums for the student group:

Table 6.19: Students' preference for groupings (QA13)

Rank order	Grouping	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	b. pairwork	906.5	3.05
2	c. group work	806.0	2.71
3	d. whole-class work	665.5	2.24
4	a. individual work	592.0	1.99

The teachers, by comparison, show a slightly different rank order, as can be seen in the following table:

Table 6.20: Teachers' preference for groupings (QB12)

Rank order	Grouping	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	c. group work	140.0	3.26
2	b. pairwork	131.0	3.05
3	d. whole-class work	83.0	1.93
4	a. individual work	76.0	1.77

The difference in the rank orders can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 6.7: A comparison of groupings (QA13, QB12)

Students

b > c > d  
a

Teachers

c > d  
b > a

Activities such as role-play, discussion, and problem-solving are common in communication-oriented classrooms, but are rarely used in structure-dominated ones. There was one question (QA14, QB13) which was designed to elicit the respondents' attitudes to different classroom activities. Respondents were asked to rate each activity on a six-point scale and the result is presented in the following table:

Table 6.21: Preference for classroom activities  
(QA14, QB13)

Activity	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
a. role-play	4.50	1.36	4.05	1.39	2.01	0.0449*
b. discussion	4.55	1.17	5.05	0.75	2.69	0.0075**
c. problem-solving	4.28	1.18	4.44	1.22	0.84	0.4014
d. pattern drills	3.28	1.42	3.84	1.25	2.42	0.0159*

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

From the above table we can see that 'discussion' has the highest rating for both students and teachers. In fact, none of the respondents from Groups 1 and 2 of the student-respondents and Group 4 (i.e., teachers) gave it a 1-point rating. Although activities such as role-play, discussion, and problem-solving may or may not be communicative (cf. Morrow 1981:59), they are potentially more interactive than activities such as pattern drills and are more likely to be associated with communicative

methodologies in the classroom. Both the students and the teachers give higher rating to 'role-play', 'discussion', and 'problem-solving', compared with those given to 'pattern drills'. However, there are significant differences between the students' rating and the teachers' with regard to role-play, discussion and pattern drills. An analysis of the pair-wise comparison of rank sums for the student group and the teacher group helps to show the differences.

Table 6.22: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of activities (QA14)

	a	b	c	d
Rank sum	850.5	841.5	762.5	515.5
a	0.0	9.0	88.0**	335.0**
b		0.0	79.0*	326.0**
c			0.0	247.0**
d				0.0

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

From the students' point of view, role-play and discussion are more favoured than problem-solving and pattern drills, and problem solving is preferred to pattern drills. The rank order of rank sums for the students group is as follows:<sup>8</sup>

Table 6.23: Students' preference for activities (QA14)

Rank order	Activity	Rank sum	Mean rank
1	a. role-play	850.5	2.86
2	b. discussion	841.5	2.83
3	c. problem-solving	762.5	2.57
4	d. pattern drills	515.5	1.74

However, the teachers have different preferences, as is shown in the following table:

Table 6.24: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of activities (QB13)

	b	c	a	d
Rank sum	135.5	111.5	95.0	88.0
b	0.0	24.0	40.5**	47.5**
c		0.0	16.5	23.5
a			0.0	7.0
d				0.0

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The teachers, unlike the students, do not show a clear preference for role-play and problem-solving over pattern drills, which may imply that for teachers pattern drills still have a role to play in ELT (see related discussion in Sections 6.6.1.2 above and 6.6.2.2 below). The respondents' different preferences can be discerned in the following figure:

Figure 6.8: A comparison of groupings of activities (QA14, QB13)

<u>Students</u>				<u>Teachers</u>			
a						c	
b	>	c	>	d	b	>	d

The rank order of rank sums for the teacher group is different from that for the student group, as can be seen from the following table:

Table 6.25: Teachers' preference for activities (QB13)

Rank order	Activity	Rank sum	Mean rank
1	b. discussion	135.5	3.15
2	c. problem-solving	111.5	2.59
3	a. role-play	95.0	2.21
4	d. pattern drills	88.0	2.05

A comparison of the rank orders for both students and teachers is worthwhile here:

Table 6.26: A comparison of preference for activities (QA14, QB13)

Rank order	From students	From teachers
1	a. role-play	b. discussion
2	b. discussion	c. problem-solving
3	c. problem-solving	a. role-play
4	d. pattern drills	d. pattern drills

It is interesting to note that students prefer role-play most, while it is ranked as the third by the teachers.



Students show a clear preference for role-play over problem-solving (see Table 6.22 above) but show no significant preference for role-play over discussion. By contrast, teachers clearly prefer discussion to role-play, as can be seen in Table 6.24 above.

The results of the above two questions (i.e., QA13 and 14, QB12 and 13) may suggest that both students and teachers alike prefer classroom groupings which are likely to facilitate interaction and classroom activities which often promote interaction, which may in turn indicate that a communicative approach to grammar teaching is appropriate in the Chinese classroom (see Maley 1984a; Li 1984b; Li 1989; Jia 1989; see also Sections 5.7 and 5.10).

#### 6.6.1.4 Attitudes to a Chinese approach to CLT

##### (1) About the CECL core course book

Students were asked to indicate on a six-point scale (1 = dislike, 6 = like) their attitudes to the CECL core course book (QA15). The mean rating is 3.93 (SD = 1.31). The students' mean rating is significantly lower ( $t = 2.62$ ,  $p = 0.0093$ ) than that given by the teachers (Mean = 4.47, SD = 0.88). Of the 297 student respondents, 286 (96.30%) give comments on their rating. The favourable comments include: It has (a) a variety of interesting texts and activities, (b) a good coverage of topics and themes, (c) a rich vocabulary, and it provides useful

sociocultural information and knowledge of English-speaking countries; it is practical from a Chinese learner's point of view; it helps learners to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as well as study skills.

However, there are unfavourable comments, which are concerned with the course book itself and the learners' reaction to it. Many of the respondents complain that there are too many new words in every unit and that there is a low frequency of word repetition. Some say that the grammar is not systematic and accuracy is ignored. Others express the opinion that there are too many materials, and some of which are not well-written (e.g., many texts were taken from China Daily). As they consider that there is too much to be learned (i.e., texts, new words and expressions) in every unit, many of the respondents feel that what they have learnt in class is forgotten after class, because they can neither absorb nor digest what has been taught/offered. Some say that they are over-loaded with too many words and materials and are not confident of what they have learnt, which echoes teachers' complaints of the lack of the 'sense of success' (see below). Some express the feeling that the teaching methodology, techniques and learning skills underlying the course book are not suitable for Chinese learners because they are used to the traditional approach (see Sections 5.4 and 5.5). Others comment that the course book is not suitable for laying foundations in

Stage-one Education at the tertiary level of education.

On the other hand, some students give, at the same time, both favourable and unfavourable comments similar to those discussed above. Some suggest that the CECL core course book be used in the third or fourth grades (i.e., at Stage-two Education) when students' level of English proficiency is higher, or be used as an extensive-reading course book. Some complain that the course is not well taught as teachers do not prepare their lessons well, which may indicate that the preparation is very time-consuming, a complaint by some teachers (see below); this may also indicate that some of the teachers are not well-trained in ELT so that they are unable to manage teaching in a communication-oriented classroom.

So far we have looked at students' responses to the CECL core course book. I now turn to the teachers' reactions to it. The following is the frequency and percentage of the teachers' ratings to QB15:

Table 6.27: Teachers' rating to the CECL core course book (QB15)

	Dislike 1	2	3	4	5	Like 6	Total
Frequency	0	0	7	15	16	5	43
%	--	--	16.28	34.88	37.21	11.63	100

The table above shows that of the 43 teachers who answer Question 15 in QB, none of the respondents give a 1-point or 2-point rating to the CECL core course book; seven (16%) give a 3-point rating, 15 (35%) a 4-point rating, 16 (37%) a 5-point rating, and five (12%) a 6-point rating. The mean of the means is 4.47 ( $SD = 0.88$ ), which is significantly higher than the students' rating (Mean = 3.93,  $SD = 1.31$ ), as already indicated. From the teachers' rating, we can see that teachers have a favourable impression of the CECL core course book. Of the 43 respondents (24 (55.81%) of whom had not used the course) of QB15, 27 (62.79%) gave comments. About 10 respondents say that the CECL core course book has a wide coverage of content and that there are many varieties of activity type which make the materials interesting and interactive. Five respondents say that the materials are practical and will arouse students' interest and that they put the emphasis on 'learning' as opposed to 'teaching'. One says that the language in the materials is authentic and another one believes that the course book is suitable for Chinese learners.

However, there are some negative comments. Four respondents (1 professor, 1 associate professor, both of whom have been to English-speaking countries to receive further training, and 2 lecturers) express their doubt of the applicability of the CECL approach in China. Some point out that grammar and vocabulary are not systematically treated in the course book so that (a) it is not

suitable as an 'intensive' (i.e., Comprehensive English) course book and (b) students do not have the 'sense of success' after learning. Others are not happy with the materials because teachers have to spend much more time in preparing the lessons partly because the teacher's handbooks are not comprehensive, compared with those that accompany the 'non-communicative' course books.

As far as I know, most of the QB respondents are either involved in the CECL project (i.e., teaching the course) or its supporters.<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that, although 65 questionnaires were distributed, only 44 were sent back and nearly half (44%) of the respondents were 'CECL' teachers. Therefore, it is not surprising that their mean rating is higher than that given by the students. One interpretation is that students do not think so highly of the CECL core course book because it is so designed that their expectations and learning styles will be challenged.

## (2) The necessity of a CECL grammar

Question 16 in QB was designed to elicit the respondents' opinions of whether there should be a grammar course book to complement the CECL core course book. The result is shown in the following table:

Table 6.28: Necessity of a CECL grammar course book (QB16)

	Frequency	%
+ Necessary	30	69.77
- Necessary	13	30.23
Total	43	100

From the table above we can see that of the 43 respondents, 30 (70%) believe that there should be a grammar course book to go with the CECL core course book and 13 say that a CECL grammar course book is not necessary. 26 (60%) out of the 43 respondents gave comments, 22 (all gave a positive reply to QB16) of whom say that a grammar course book is necessary because grammar is not systematically treated in the CECL core course book. In order to compare the observed frequencies (30:13) with the expected frequencies (21.5:21.5), the chi-square test was used. The observed value of  $X^2$  is 6.72 (d.f. = 1;  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicates that there is a significant desire to have a 'CECL' grammar course book. When asked whether they could recommend a grammar course book to complement the CECL core course, four suggested Zhang et al (1981-3), three Zhang (1979), two Thomson and Martinet (1980), one Bao and Zhao (1982), and one Swan (1980). Unfortunately, all the recommended course books are reference grammar books. This confirms the result of Liu, Wu and Yu's (1990) survey (see Section 5.6.2.5). Of the 13 who give a negative reply to QB16, two believe that the CECL core

course and a grammar course are incompatible; therefore it is impossible to reconcile the CECL core course and a CECL grammar course. One says that as there is some grammar in the CECL core course book it is not necessary to have a separate grammar course book, and one believes that students have no grammatical problems.

(3) The interpretation of the communicative approach

Question 17 in QB was designed to see the teachers' understandings and interpretations of the communicative approach to language teaching. The result is shown in the following figure:

Figure 6.9: Responses to QB17

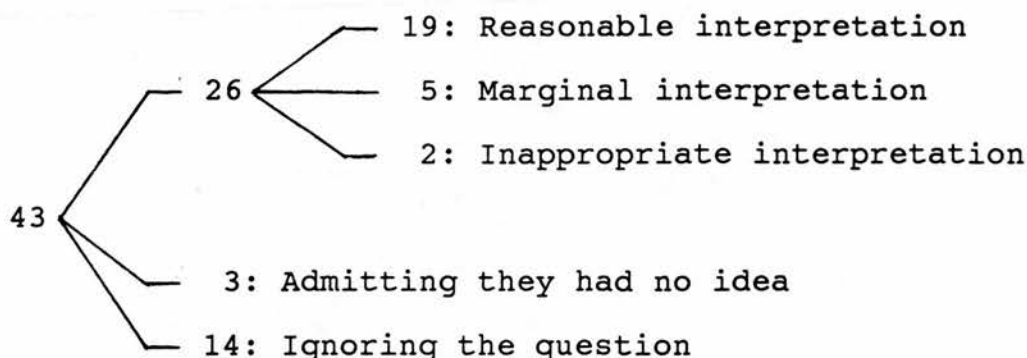


Figure 6.9 above shows that of the 43 teacher respondents, 14 (32.56%) ignore the question (which, in my opinion, may suggest that they found it difficult to give a 'definition' or that they were not honest enough to admit that they were not sure what the communicative approach was.), three (6.98%) admit that they are not sure what the communicative approach means, and 26 give their interpretations of the communicative approach to language teaching. From the comments given, 19 (44.19%)



of the respondents give reasonable interpretations of the communicative approach<sup>10</sup>, five (11.63%) give 'marginal interpretations', and two (4.65%) give inappropriate interpretations. Of those who give reasonable interpretations, three respondents believe that the communicative approach should be combined with other approaches and one expresses his doubt of the applicability of the approach in China.

#### 6.6.2 The Teaching and Learning of Grammar

We have so far looked at the results of the questions concerning ELT in general. I now turn to the issues concerning the teaching and learning of grammar.

##### 6.6.2.1 Learning the rules, terms, and the use of rules

Both the students and teachers were asked to indicate on a six-point scale the importance of learning (a) grammatical rules, (b) grammatical terms, and (c) how to use grammatical rules. (QA3, QB3) The following are the results:

Table 6.29: Preference for learning grammatical rules, terms, and the use of rules (QA3, QB3)

	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
a.L-ing rule	4.17	1.18	4.19	0.98	0.11	0.9113
b.L-ing term	2.83	1.30	2.19	1.16	3.03	0.0022**
c.L-ing to use rule	4.94	1.30	5.35	1.09	1.97	0.0501

L-ing = Learning; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The above table indicates that for both students and teachers learning how to use grammatical rules is considered the most important and learning grammatical terms is the least important. This suggests that in the teaching and learning of grammar the focus should be on the rules and their uses rather than on the terms. The mean rating given to item (b) (i.e., learning grammatical terms) by students is significantly higher than that given by the teachers. By contrast, teachers give a higher mean (approaching a marginal significance) to item (c) (i.e., learning how to use grammatical rules). When they were asked to indicate on a six-point scale (1 = never, 6 = always) how often they thought of grammar rules in speaking and writing (QA12), the students admitted that they very often did so when they wrote English (Mean = 5.04, SD = 0.94) and fairly often in speaking (Mean = 3.56, SD = 1.05). The difference between the mean rating given to speaking and that given

to writing is highly significant ( $t = 22.84$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ). This may suggest that students are more careful of grammar rules in writing than in speaking. Although both students and teachers believe that learning grammatical rules is important, they nevertheless estimate the frequency of memorisation of rules (QA5, QB5) as fairly low (students: mean rating = 3.31; teachers: mean rating = 3.81), as was pointed out earlier (see Section 6.6.1.2 above).

#### 6.6.2.2 The teaching of grammar

There were five questions (QA4, 6, 7, 8, 9; QB4, 6, 7, 8, 9) concerning the teaching of grammar in the classroom. When they were asked to respond on a six-point scale (1 = dislike, 6 = like) to how much they liked lecture-based grammar teaching (QA4), the students gave a mean rating of 3.22, as is shown in the following table:

Table 6.30: Preference for  
lecture-based  
teaching (QA4)

Group	Mean
1	3.01
2	3.46
3	3.20
X'	3.22

From Table 6.30 we can see that the mean response in Group 2 is higher than those in the other two groups. The reason may be that the students in Group 2 had just

finished the lecture-based grammar course, when answering the question, and they had a better impression of the teaching mode than other students. The following is the distribution of the students' ratings:

Table 6.31: Distribution of preference for lecture-based teaching (QA4)

Group	Dislike					Like	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	12	27	32	24	8	4	107
2	8	15	26	43	13	4	109
3	9	12	28	20	10	2	81
Total	29	54	86	87	31	10	297
%	9.76	18.18	28.96	29.29	10.44	3.37	100

In order to see whether there was any significant difference between the ratings of the three students groups, the chi-square test was used. The observed value of  $\chi^2$  is 15.3597 (d.f. = 10;  $p < 0.01$ ), which shows that there is a significant difference in distribution of responses between the three groups of students. Altogether 267 respondents (90%) from the student group give reasons for their ratings. Most of them believe that lecture-based grammar teaching is dull and not a good way of learning grammar. Some say that the teacher's lecturing does not lead to learning. By contrast, when the teachers were asked whether they would give lectures if they were to teach grammar to second-year university students of English (QB4), 23 (53%) said

YES and 20 (47%) NO. The observed value of  $\chi^2$  is 0.2093 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicates that there is no significant difference in the rating among the teachers. 35 (81.40%) of the teachers give reasons for their choices. Many of those who tick YES believe that lecture-based teaching is effective and time-saving. Some say that lecture-based grammar teaching can help students to understand rules better. Of those who are against lecture-based teaching, most think that rules can be better learned and mastered in practice than by listening to their explanations given in a lecture. Some believe that understanding rules does not mean the ability to use them.

Of the 297 students who completed QA, 109 were second-year students and 81 third-year students who had taken a grammar course during their studies in the university when they were asked to complete the questionnaire. Question 6 in QA was designed to confirm whether the respondent had been given a grammar course. Question 8 asked those (190) who answered YES in QA6 to write down the title of the grammar course book used in their course, and Question 7 asked them to evaluate the course book. The course book used for both groups of students is Thomson and Martinet (1980), and the mean rating of the book is 4.21 on a six-point scale (1 = dislike, 6 = like). The mean response from those (109) who had just finished the grammar course is higher (4.90) than that (mean = 3.52) given by those who had had the

course one year earlier, when they were asked to complete the questionnaire. The following is the distribution of their preferences for the grammar course book:

Table 6.32: Preference for grammar course book (QA7)

Group	Dislike <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Like</span>						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	0	2	8	23	42	34	109
3	9	6	16	34	16	0	81
Total	9	8	24	57	58	34	190
%	4.74	4.21	12.63	30.00	30.53	17.89	100

The observed value of  $\chi^2$  is 58.5908 (d.f. = 5,  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicates that there is a significant difference in the rating between the two groups of students. The reason why those (i.e., second-year students) who had just finished the course when asked to complete the questionnaire gave a higher mean rating to the course book than those (i.e., third-year students) who finished the course one year earlier may be that the second-year students remember more clearly what was being taught/offered in the grammar course and the course book, since both grades of students were taught by the same teachers.

Questions 6, 7, 8, in QB were about teachers' experience of teaching grammar to university students. Of the 43 teachers, only five (1 professor, 1 associate

professor, 2 lecturers, 1 assistant lecturer) had experience in teaching grammar as a course in the university programme. (QB6) Question 8 asked those who answered YES in QB6 to write down the title(s) of the grammar course books they used (no two persons used the same book), four of which were reference books (i.e., Leech and Svartvik 1975; Thomson and Martinet 1980; Zhang 1979; Zhang et al 1981-3) and one of which was compiled by the classroom teacher himself. Question 7 asked those who answered YES in QB6 to evaluate the course books they used, and the mean of the means is 4.00 on a six-point (1 = very bad, 6 = very good) scale.

Question 9 in both QA and QB was designed to ask the respondents to indicate on a six-point scale how much they liked each of the ten 'strategies'/'techniques' of presentation of grammar in the classroom. The following are the ten 'strategies' and 'techniques':

- a. the teacher gives the rules of what is right and what is wrong;
- b. the teacher explains the rules;
- c. the teacher explains the grammatical terms;
- d. the teacher draws students' attention to grammar points but does not give rules;
- e. the teacher lectures on grammar and students listen and take notes;
- f. the students learn rules subconsciously from listening to and reading English;



- g. the students do pattern drills on specific grammar points;
- h. the students practise certain grammar item by doing classroom activities;
- i. the students discover rules for themselves by studying examples of grammar points;
- j. the students memorise rules.

The t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in the mean ratings given by students and teachers, with the results shown in Table 6.33 below:

Table 6.33: Preference for different classroom strategies/techniques (QA9, QB9)

Strategy	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
a	3.88	1.31	3.51	1.30	1.71	0.0889
b	3.93	1.22	3.65	1.27	1.40	0.1613
c	3.05	1.32	2.21	1.04	4.01	0.0001***
d	3.56	1.29	3.56	1.40	0.00	0.9971
e	3.28	1.32	2.95	1.13	1.54	0.1241
f	4.54	1.22	4.23	1.36	1.53	0.1269
g	4.10	1.33	4.56	1.14	2.13	0.0342*
h	4.22	1.32	4.33	1.27	0.48	0.6298
i	4.15	1.34	4.53	1.05	1.80	0.0723
j	3.17	1.45	3.51	1.28	1.47	0.1419

SD = Standard deviation; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

In order to see the degree of relationship between the students' and the teachers' ratings, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used:  $r = 0.850$ , d.f. = 8, and  $p = 0.002$ , which indicates that there is a high correlation between the ratings of the students and that of the teachers. As is shown in Table 6.33 above, with two items (c & g) there are significant differences between the students' rating and the teachers': students show a highly significant preference for 'strategy' (c), compared to the teacher's rating, which reflects the students' and teachers' different opinions of the importance of learning grammatical terms discussed at the beginning of this section. On the other hand, the teachers show a marginally significant preference for 'strategy' (g). The pair-wise comparison from Friedman's ANOVA can help us to see the different rank orders of the items. Let us first look at the students' responses.

Table 6.34: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of strategies (QA9)

	f	h	i	g	b	a	d	e	j	c
RS	2124.5	1935.5	1862.0	1855.0	1718.0	1705.5	1471.0	1303.5	1236.5	1123.5
f	0.0	189.0	262.5**	269.5**	406.5**	419.0**	653.5**	821.0**	888.0**	1001.0**
h		0.0	73.5	80.5	217.5	230.0*	464.5**	632.0**	699.0**	812.0**
i			0.0	7.0	144.0	156.5	391.0**	558.5**	625.5**	738.5**
g				0.0	137.0	149.5	384.0**	551.5**	618.5**	731.5**
b					0.0	12.5	247.0**	414.5**	481.5**	594.5**
a						0.0	234.5*	402.0**	469.0**	582.0**
d							0.0	167.5	234.5*	347.5**
e								0.0	67.0	180.0
j									0.0	113.0
c										0.0

RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The value of Friedman's statistics  $F_r$  is 74.54, which is highly significant ( $p < 0.0001$ ), indicating that there is a high degree of agreement among the respondents. Table 6.34 above shows that students preferred item (f) significantly to all others except (h), indicating that they like to learn grammatical rules subconsciously. Also, the table indicates that students like practising certain grammar items by doing certain kinds of classroom activity (h) more than some other strategies/techniques, which may mean that they prefer meaning-focused activities. The difference between the different strategies/techniques shown in Table 6.34 can be

represented as follows:

Figure 6.10: Students' groupings of strategies/techniques (QA9)

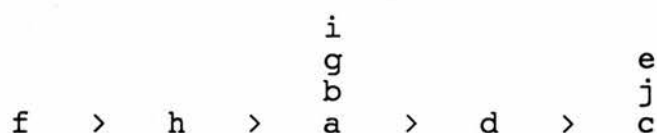


Table 6.34 above shows not only the differences between the different strategies/techniques but also the rank order, as is shown in the following table:

Table 6.35: Students' preference for strategies/techniques (QA9)

Rank order	Strategy	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	f	2124.5	7.15
2	h	1935.5	6.52
3	i	1862.0	6.27
4	g	1855.0	6.25
5	b	1718.0	5.78
6	a	1705.5	5.74
7	d	1471.0	4.95
8	e	1303.5	4.39
9	j	1236.5	4.16
10	c	1123.5	3.78

Tables 6.34 and 6.35 indicate that the students prefer strategy/technique (f) and (h) most and (e), (j) and (c) least. This contrasts with the teachers' preferences, as is shown in Table 6.36 below:

Table 6.36: Matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of strategies (QB9)

	g	i	h	f	b	d	a	j	e	c
RS	317.5	315.5	294.5	283.5	233.5	224.0	210.5	208.5	170.0	107.5
g	0.0	2.0	23.0	34.0	84.0	93.5**	107.0**	109.0**	147.5**	210.0**
i		0.0	21.0	32.0	82.0	91.5*	105.0**	107.0**	145.5**	208.0**
h			0.0	11.0	61.0	70.5	84.0	86.0*	124.5**	187.0**
f				0.0	50.0	59.5	73.0	75.0	113.5**	176.0**
b					0.0	9.5	23.0	25.0	63.5	126.0**
d						0.0	13.5	15.5	54.0	116.5**
a							0.0	2.0	40.5	103.0**
j								0.0	38.5	101.0**
e									0.0	62.5
c										0.0

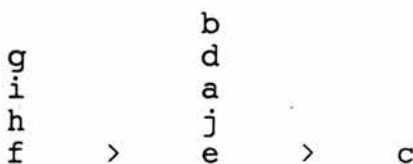
RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 6.36 above shows that from the teachers' point of view the most preferred strategies/techniques are (g), (i), (h) and (f) and the least preferred is (c). Table 6.36 clearly contrasts with Table 6.34 above. For the teachers, the most preferred 'method' is (g), which is ranked fourth in the students' ranking. This indicates that teachers prefer doing pattern drills on specific grammar points (g) to all other strategies/techniques and that students prefer learning grammatical rules subconsciously from listening and reading (f) to other strategies/techniques, which, in turn, implies that for the teachers form-focused activities are very important in the teaching of grammar while from the students' point

of view the teaching and learning of grammar should be implicit. What the teachers rate as the top two (g & i) are rated as the third and fourth by students, and vice versa. According to the teachers' ratings, memorising rules (j) is more important than strategy/technique (c) and only three items (g, i, & h) are more significantly favoured than it (j). By contrast, in students' rating, memorising rules is the last but one, for they prefer all other items except (e) and (c) significantly better to it (j). These contrasts match the students' and teachers' different attitudes to doing pattern drills and memorising grammar rules discussed in Section 6.6.1.2 above. Earlier in this section, we discussed the students' reactions to lecture-based grammar teaching (QA4: How much do you like to be given lectures on grammar?) and found that they did not like it very much. Here in QA9 we asked almost the same question in another way (e) and the students gave a similar reaction, for the mean rating of (e) in QA9 is not very high either. The results of these two questions may show that lecture-based teaching is not a very favoured way of teaching grammar.

The teachers' preferences for the different items can be grouped as follows:

Figure 6.11: Teachers' grouping of strategies/techniques (QB9)



The rank order of the different strategies/techniques for the teacher group is shown below:

Table 6.37: Teacher's preference for strategies/techniques (QB9)

Rank order	Strategy	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	g	317.5	7.38
2	i	315.5	7.34
3	h	294.5	6.85
4	f	283.5	6.59
5	b	233.5	5.43
6	d	224.5	5.22
7	a	210.5	4.90
8	j	208.5	4.85
9	e	170.0	3.95
10	c	107.5	2.50

From Tables 6.35 and 6.37 above we can see that the rank order for the students is different from that for the teacher group, as is compared below:



Table 6.38: A comparison of preferences (QA9, QB9)

Rank order	From students	From teachers
1	f	g
2	h	i
3	i	h
4	g	f
5	b	b
6	a	d
7	d	a
8	e	j
9	j	e
10	c	c

Table 6.38 above shows that strategies/techniques (f), (g), (h), and (i) are the top four and (a), (d), (e), and (j) are on the lower half, with (b) the 5th and (c) the last. Both students and teachers give the lowest rating to the teacher's explanation of grammatical terms (c), which matches their ratings to the importance of learning the grammatical terms (QA3, QB3) (discussed at the beginning of this section).

If the 10 strategies/techniques are put under two headings -- an explicit strategy and an implicit strategy (see Section 4.2), (a), (b), (c), (e), (g), and (j) belong to the first category and (d), (f), (h), and (i) to the second category. From the rank orders derived from the respondents' ratings, we can see that all the

implicit strategies/techniques except one (i.e., (d), see discussion below) receive high ranking and that all the explicit ones except one (i.e., (g), see discussion below) have low ranking, as is shown in the following table:

Table 6.39: Strategies and their rank orders  
(QA9, QB9)

<u>Explicit</u> strategy	Ss' rating	Ts' rating		<u>Implicit</u> strategy	Ss' rating	Ts' rating
a	6	7		d	7	6
b	5	5		f	1	4
c	10	10		h	2	3
e	8	9		i	3	2
g	4	1				
j	9	8				

Ss' = Students', Ts' = Teachers'

This indicates that on the whole both students and teachers prefer the implicit and learner-activation strategy of grammar teaching and learning to the explicit and learner-passivity strategy. However, there are two exceptions. Strategy (g) is structured-oriented, but the teachers give it the highest rating and the students also greatly prefer it to strategies/techniques such as (d), (e), (j), and (c) (see Table 6.33 above) and rank it as the fourth in the rank order. The ratings given by the students and teachers to doing pattern drills in the question (i.e., QA9/QB9) are higher than those given to

pattern drills when it is listed as a kind of classroom activity in QA14/QB13 (see Section 6.6.1.3 above); in both cases the teachers give significantly higher ratings than the students do. Also, only 12% of the student-respondents regard doing pattern drills as one of the best ways to learn English whereas 40% of the teacher-respondents agree that it is one of the best ways; the difference between the students' response and that of the teachers is significant (see Section 6.6.1.2 above). Why do the respondents give inconsistent reactions to the same classroom activity? Why do they give a higher rating to doing pattern drills in QA9/QB9 than in QA14/QB13? In QA9/QB9, the activity was being rated in the context of teaching and learning grammar and in relation to strategies/techniques/activities such as (a) (the teacher gives the rules of what is right and what is wrong), (c) (the teacher explains the grammatical terms), and (e) (the teacher lectures on grammar and students listen and take notes). Therefore, (g) (i.e., doing pattern drills) was given a favourable rating. By comparison, in QA14/QB13, 'pattern drills' was being evaluated in contrast with interaction-oriented activities (role-play, discussion, problem-solving); thus, it received an unfavourable rating. The fact that doing pattern drills in QA9/QB9 is rated as highly preferred may imply that in the context of teaching grammar in particular doing pattern drills is a necessary activity. The teachers' significantly high rating (when

compared with that of the students) of doing pattern drills may show that they regard it as a necessary and effective activity in teaching and learning English.

Technique (d) in QA9/QB9 is rather implicit -- 'teacher draws students' attention to grammar points but does not give rules'. The students and teachers give almost the same rating (see Table 6.33 above). The reason that this technique is not highly preferred may be that it is too implicit -- students may not be able to discover the underlying rule(s) themselves or it may be too time-consuming for a grammar course.

The implications drawn from the results of QA9/QB9 and the related questions discussed earlier are that:

- (1) Grammar teaching strategies/techniques should be both implicit and explicit;
- (2) Grammar teaching and learning should be both meaning-focused and form-focused.

### 6.6.2.3 The design of grammar teaching materials

#### 6.6.2.3.1 The organising principle

Both the students and teachers were asked (QA16, QB18) to decide which of the following they preferred:

- A) To learn different meanings of the same structure in one lesson (e.g., to learn the three meanings (permission, possibility, ability) of CAN together ).
- B) To learn different structures which express the

same meaning in one lesson (e.g., to learn CAN, MAY, WILL, LIKELY, PROBABLY, PERHAPS, etc.

together to express the meaning of POSSIBILITY).

The result is shown in the following table:

Table 6.40: Preference for form-based or meaning-based (QA16, QB18)

Principle	Students		Teachers	
	f	%	f	%
a. Form-based	92	30.98	10	23.26
b. Meaning-based	205	69.02	33	76.74
Total	297	100	43	100

f = Frequency

Of the students, 264 (89%) give reasons for their choices. Most of those who favour option B say that they prefer it to A because (a) it is more interesting to learn different forms which express the 'same' meaning than to learn the different meanings of the same form, and (b) if more than one form which can be used to express the same meaning is available, communication is less likely to break down than when there is only one form available. Of the 43 teacher-respondents of QB18, 33 (77%) prefer B to A and only 10 (23%) favour A more than B. 30 (70%) out of the 43 give comments on their choices. The teachers' reasons in favour of option B include: (a) more useful and relevant in learning language for communication, (b) more interesting so that

students are more likely to be motivated. The chi-square test was used to compare the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies. The observed value of  $\chi^2$  is 1.0662 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicates that option B is clearly preferred to option A.

The result of QA16/QB18 may indicate that both students and teachers prefer the meaning-based principle to the form-based one, which may imply that they would prefer a notional/functional syllabus to a structural one, because they believe that learning a language should be interesting on the one hand and is for communication purposes on the other.

#### 6.6.2.3.2 The communicative and structural exercises

As was pointed out in Section 6.4.4.3 above, communicative and structural exercises are on a continuum and the more communicative an exercise is the more communicative features it has. In order to see how much respondents liked different types of exercise, the respondents of both QA and QB were given seven exercises and were asked to give a 'general impression' rating on the continuum of 1 (=dislike) to 6 (=like) for each exercise and to provide reasons for their ratings (QA17, 18, and 19; QB24, 25, and 26). After the individual exercises in each group were evaluated, the respondents were asked to place the exercises for comparison on the 'dislike--(no opinion)--like' cline.

## (1) Results of Exercises 1, 2, and 3

These three exercises are designed to practise Wh-questions. The t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in the mean ratings given by students and teachers, with the results shown in the following table:

Table 6.41: The mean, the standard deviation, the t-value and the p-value of Exercises 1, 2 and 3 (QA17, QB24)

Exercise	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	4.20	1.30	4.23	1.19	0.18	0.8595
2	3.00	1.33	3.47	1.22	2.18	0.0299*
3	4.53	1.15	4.35	1.34	0.95	0.3417

\*  $p < 0.05$

The above table shows that Exercise 3 has the highest mean rating while Exercise 2 has the lowest for both groups. The mean rating of Exercise 2 given by the teachers is significantly higher than that given by the students. Of the 297 student-respondents, 264 (89%) gave reasons for their rating. Of the 43 respondents, 31 (72%) gave reasons for their rating. After giving a general impression rating to the three exercises, respondents placed, as requested, the exercises on the 'dislike--no opinion--like' cline. The following are the observed frequencies of preference for the exercises for the student group and the teacher group:



Table 6.42: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 1, 2, and 3 for students (QA17)

Exercise	Dislike		No opinion		Like	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	47	15.82	158	53.20	92	30.98
2	233	78.45	48	16.16	16	5.39
3	17	5.72	91	30.64	189	63.64
Total	297	99.99	297	100	297	100.01

f = Frequency

Table 6.43: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 1, 2, and 3 for teachers (QB24)

Exercise	Dislike		No opinion		Like	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	8	18.60	21	48.84	14	32.56
2	31	72.09	8	18.60	4	9.30
3	4	9.30	14	32.56	25	58.14
Total	43	99.99	43	100	43	100

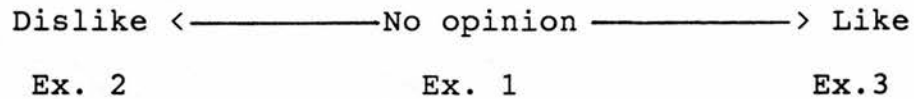
f = Frequency

The observed value of  $\chi^2$  of the student group is 490.5859 (d.f. = 4,  $p < 0.01$ ) and that of the teacher group is 50.9302 (d.f. = 4,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that both groups of respondents have significantly different preferences for the exercises.

Tables 6.42 and 6.43 indicate that most of both the 297 student-respondents and 43 teacher-respondents prefer Exercise 3 and dislike Exercise 2, leaving Exercise 1 in the middle-ground. Therefore, the general conclusion

drawn from the results for both the students and teachers is as follows:

Figure 6.12: Exercises on the dislike-no opinion-like continuum (QA17, QB24)



## (2) Results of Exercises 4 and 5

These two exercises are designed to practise the BECAUSE-clause. The t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in the mean ratings given by students and teachers, with the results shown below:

Table 6.44: The mean, the standard deviation the t-value and the p-value of Exercises 4 and 5 (QA18, QB25)

Exercise	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
4	2.98	1.29	3.00	1.05	0.11	0.9086
5	4.21	1.32	4.60	0.90	1.89	0.0597

Table 6.44 shows that Exercise 5 is preferred to 4. Of the 297 student-respondents, 260 (87.54%) gave reasons for their rating, and 28 (65.12%) out of the 43 teacher-respondents gave reasons for their rating. After giving a general impression rating to the two exercises, respondents put, as required, the exercises on the 'dislike----like' cline. The following are the observed frequencies of preference for Exercises 4 and 5 for both

the students (Table 6.45) and the teachers (Table 6.46).

Table 6.45: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 4 and 5 for students (QA18)

Exercise	Dislike		Like	
	f	%	f	%
4	250	84.18	47	15.82
5	47	15.82	250	84.18
Total	297	100	297	100

f = Frequency

Table 6.46: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 4 and 5 for teachers (QB25)

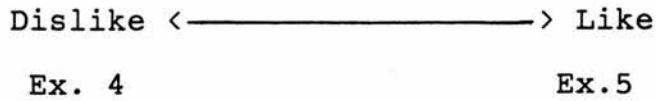
Exercise	Dislike		Like	
	f	%	f	%
4	38	88.37	5	11.63
5	5	11.63	38	88.37
Total	43	100	43	100

f = Frequency

The observed value of  $\chi^2$  for the student group is 277.5017 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ) and that for the teacher group is 50.6512 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ), which shows that both groups of respondents have a significant preference for Exercise 5.

Tables 6.45 and 6.46 above show that the majority of both the 297 student-respondents and the 43 teacher-respondents prefer Exercise 5 to 4, which means that the general conclusion can be drawn:

Figure 6.13: Exercises on the dislike-like continuum (QA18, QB25)



### (3) Results of Exercises 6 and 7

Exercises 6 and 7 are designed to practise comparison of adjectives. The t-test was used to evaluate the significance of differences in the mean ratings given by students and teachers. The mean, the standard deviation, the t-value and the p-value for both groups are as follows:

Table 6.47: The mean, the standard deviation, the t-value and the p-value of Exercises 6 and 7 (QA19, QB26)

Exercise	Students		Teachers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
6	3.85	1.27	4.49	0.74	3.23	0.0014**
7	3.37	1.23	3.51	1.18	0.72	0.4692

**\*\* p < 0.01**

From Table 6.47 we can see that both groups of respondents prefer Exercise 6 to 7. The mean rating for Exercise 6 given by the teachers is significantly higher than that given by the students. Of the 297 student-respondents, 252 (84.85%) gave reasons for their rating, and 28 (65.12%) out of the 43 teacher-respondents gave reasons for their rating. Again, after giving a general

impression rating to Exercises 6 and 7, respondents were asked to place them on the 'dislike----like' cline. The observed frequency of preference for the two exercises is as follows:

Table 6.48: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 6 and 7 for students (QA19)

Exercise	Dislike		Like	
	f	%	f	%
6	89	29.97	208	70.03
7	208	70.03	89	29.97
Total	297	100	297	100

f = Frequency

Table 6.49: Observed frequency of preference for Exercises 6 and 7 for teachers (QB26)

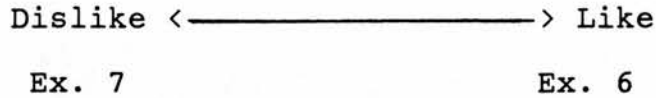
Exercise	Dislike		Like	
	f	%	f	%
6	12	27.91	31	72.09
7	31	72.09	12	27.91
Total	43	100	43	100

f = Frequency

The observed value of  $\chi^2$  for the student group is 95.3603 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ) and that for the teacher group is 16.7907 (d.f. = 1,  $p < 0.01$ ), which suggests both groups of respondents have a significant preference for Exercise 6 over 7. As is shown in Tables 6.48 and 6.49 above, the majority of respondents from both the student group and the teacher group prefer Exercise 6 to

7, which may indicate that we can draw a general conclusion from the results:

Figure 6.14: Exercises on the dislike-like continuum (QA19, QB26)



(4) The correlation of the responses from both groups

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test whether there was a high degree of relationship between the students' ratings of the exercises and those given by the teachers, and the result is as follows:  $r = 0.889$ , d.f. = 5, and  $p = 0.007$ , which indicates that there is a high correlation between the students' rating and that of the teachers.

(5) Rank order of the exercises

We have seen that students and teachers have different degrees of preference for the exercises, some of which are of significance. I turn now to the rank order of the exercises and the pair-wise comparisons of rank sums of the exercises. The following is the matrix for display of pair-wise comparisons of rank sums for the student group:

Table 6.50: A pair-wise comparison of rank sums of exercises for students (QA17, 18, 19)

	3	5	1	6	7	2	4
RS	1548.5	1406.0	1388.0	1256.5	1007.0	861.5	848.5
3	0.0	142.5	160.5**	292.0**	541.5**	687.0**	700.0**
5		0.0	18.0	149.5*	399.0**	544.5**	557.5**
1			0.0	131.5	381.0**	526.5**	539.5**
6				0.0	249.5**	395.0**	408.0**
7					0.0	145.5	158.5*
2						0.0	13.0
4							0.0

RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The above matrix shows that for the students the most favoured exercises are 3 and 5 while the least favoured exercises are 7, 2 and 4. From the matrix above, the exercises can be grouped as follows:

Figure 6.15: The grouping of the exercises (QA 17, 18, 19)

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} & & & & 7 \\ 3 & & 1 & & 2 \\ 5 & > & 6 & > & 4 \end{array}$$

The rank order of the rank sums of the exercises for the student group is given in the table below:



Table 6.51: Students' preference for exercises  
(QA 17, 18, 19)

Rank order	Exercise	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	3	1548.5	5.21
2	5	1406.0	4.73
3	1	1388.0	4.67
4	6	1256.5	4.23
5	7	1007.0	3.39
6	2	861.5	2.90
7	4	848.5	2.86

Tables 6.50 and 6.51 above show that the students prefer Exercises 3 and 5 to Exercises 6, 7, 2, and 4, which contrasts with the teachers' preferences, as is shown in the following table:

Table 6.52: A pair-wise comparison of the rank sums  
of exercises for teachers (QB 24, 25, 26)

	5	6	3	1	7	2	4
RS	225.0	208.0	202.0	193.0	142.5	133.0	100.5
5	0.0	17.0	23.0	32.0	82.5**	92.0**	124.5**
6		0.0	6.0	15.0	65.5**	75.0**	107.5**
3			0.0	9.0	59.5*	69.0**	101.5**
1				0.0	50.5	60.0*	92.5**
7					0.0	9.5	42.0
2						0.0	32.5
4							0.0

RS = Rank sum; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The table above shows that teachers preferred Exercises 5, 6, 3 and 1 more than 4, 2 and 7. Although there are different degrees of preferences for Exercises 5, 6, 3

and 1, the difference is not statistically significant.

The exercises can be grouped as follows:

Figure 6.16: The grouping of the exercises  
(QB24, 25, 26)

```

5
6       7
3       2
1   >   4

```

The rank order of rank sums for the teachers' group is shown in the following table:

Table 6.53: Teachers' preference for exercises  
(QB24, 25, 26)

Rank order	Exercise	Rank sums	Mean ranks
1	5	225.0	5.23
2	6	208.0	4.84
3	3	202.0	4.70
4	1	193.0	4.49
5	7	142.5	3.31
6	2	133.0	3.09
7	4	100.5	2.34

The different rank orders between the student group and the teacher group can be clearly seen in the following table:

Table 6.54: A comparison of preferences for exercises (QA 17, 18, 19; QB 24, 25, 26)

Rank order	Exercises	
	For students	For teachers
1	3	5
2	5	6
3	1	3
4	6	1
5	7	7
6	2	2
7	4	4

From the above table we can see that both students and teachers prefer Exercises 4, 2 and 7 least. In the students' rating, Exercise 3 is the most preferred, which is the third in the teachers' rating. Exercise 6 is the fourth in the students' rank order, but it is the second in the teachers' rating. The differences shown here will be discussed in the following section.

#### 6.6.2.3.3 Discussion of the exercises

As more than 80 % of the student-respondents and 70% of the teacher-respondents give reasons and comments for their ratings, the results can be best interpreted when the comments are taken into consideration.

### (1) General impression of the two types of exercises

As can be seen from Tables 6.50 and 6.52 above, both students' and teachers' responses indicate that communicative exercises are significantly preferred to the corresponding non-communicative ones. Clearly, the seven exercises fall into two main types, which confirms my hypothesis stated earlier (see Section 6.4.4.3). Most of the student-respondents and teacher-respondents describe the communicative exercises as 'meaningful', 'interesting', 'motivating', 'authentic', 'creative', 'contextualised', and 'choice-free'; some of them believe them to be 'task-based', 'learning-centred', and/or 'personalised'. As for the structural ones, most of the respondents regard them as 'dull', 'monotonous', 'mechanical', 'manipulative', 'de-motivating', 'non-creative', 'contextless', and 'choice-limited'. None of the respondents, however, mentions features such as 'goal-directed', 'meaning-focused', or 'integrative'.

### (2) Students' and teachers' different reactions

As was indicated in Tables 6.41, 6.44, and 6.47 above, students' rating of Exercises 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 is not significantly different from that of the teachers. However, there are significant different reactions to Exercises 2 and 6. From the students' perspective, Exercise 2 is dull and should be rejected. By contrast, many of the teachers believe that this kind of mechanical exercise is necessary in language teaching and learning

despite its monotony. Some teachers point out that Exercise 2 is good because it is form-focused and easy to control in class and it is a good way of testing one's ability to form Wh-questions. The teachers' general reaction to Exercise 2 matches their rating of activities such as pattern drills, discussed earlier in Section 6.6.2.2.

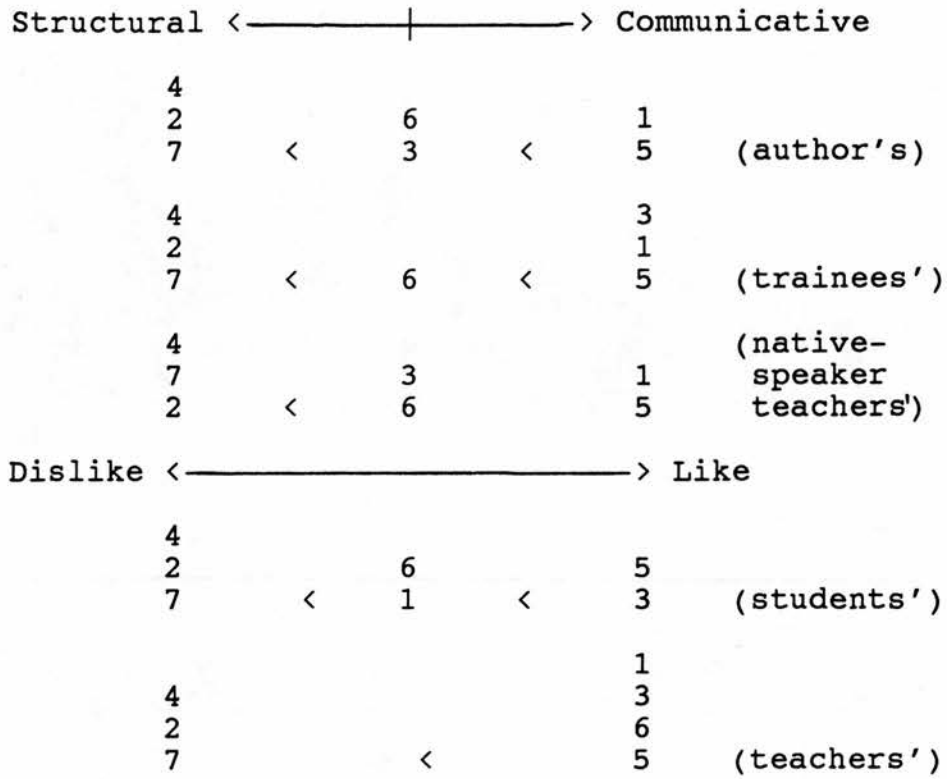
Teachers give a much higher rating to Exercise 6, compared with the students' rating. Many teacher-respondents say that this exercise is a better type because it is neither choice-limited nor choice-free and because it involves imitation and creativity. By contrast, many of the student-respondents consider that Exercise 6 is non-creative and is a matter of imitation.

Teachers give higher ratings to all exercises except one (i.e., Exercise 3) than the students do.

### (3) Communicativeness and preference

In Section 6.4.4.3, the seven exercises were ranged along a structural-communicative continuum; and in Section 6.4.4.4, the results of the nine MA/MSc trainees' and the eight native-speaker teachers' judgements were reported. The result of the ratings given to the exercises by students and teachers concerning their preference, to a large extent, matches my hypothetical pattern of communicative and structural types as well as the MA/MSc trainees' and the native-speaker teachers' judgements, as is shown in the following:

Figure 6.17: Communicativeness and preference



As indicated earlier, generally speaking the seven exercises fall into two groups and there is no significant difference between the exercises in either group. Figure 6.17 above indicates that the communicative exercises are much preferred. In the students' rating, the general tendency (except for Exercise 3, discussed below) is that the more communicative an exercise is the more they prefer it. However, in the teachers' rating, this only applies to the structure-oriented exercises. For the communication-oriented exercises, the more communicative an exercise is, the lower the rating, with the exception of Exercise 5. The reason for the teachers' rating may be that for

teachers the learning and teaching of grammar items should be both controlled and free; if an exercise is too meaning-focused, it may not practise the form that is the main concern of the lesson, nor is it easy to control in class. Besides, if the focus is not on the form, then it is likely that the something else other than grammar is being taught. This, to a large extent, matches their views of the different teaching strategies/techniques discussed in Section 6.6.2.2. However, the interpretation here does not explain why Exercise 5, which is the most communicative according to my hypothesis, receives the highest rating given by the teachers. If we compare Exercises 1 and 3 with 5 while keeping in mind that these three exercises were designed to practise certain grammatical items, we may come to the conclusion that Exercise 5 is more form-focused than either 1 or 3. When doing Exercise 1 students may write down questions which are not Wh-questions and likewise doing Exercise 3 does not mean that one has always to use Wh-questions. By contrast, answering the Why-questions in Exercise 5 inevitably involves using the because-clause. If the explanation and discussion given here is reasonable, it is consistent with the interpretation of the teachers' rating of the four communication-oriented exercises.

It is of interest to note that Exercise 6, which comes between the two distinctive groups (i.e., structural and communicative) in my hypothetical pattern, and in the Chinese teacher trainees' and the native-



speaker teachers' judgements, is rated by the Chinese teachers as highly preferred, as is shown in Figure 6.17 above. The students' rating of the exercise is different from the teachers'. It is clear that the Chinese teacher trainees and the native-speaker teachers were conscious of the underlying features when they were evaluating the exercise. Therefore, their rating matches my hypothetical pattern, which is based on a close analysis of the underlying features of the exercise. The reason for the teachers' rating may be that they believe that Exercise 6 is the right kind of exercise, for in their comments on the exercise many say that they like it because it involves both control and freedom: control because students will follow the examples and freedom because they have the opportunity to express personal preferences. By contrast, students do not rate the exercise highly because it involves a kind of pattern drilling. Many of the student respondents say that the exercise is mechanical and monotonous. It may be said that the teachers' and students' views reflect different perspectives; teachers are more concerned with pedagogical considerations while the students are more concerned with personal interest/preference.

If we look at the communicative features of Exercise 1 and 3 (see Section 6.4.4.3 above), we can see that Exercise 1 has more features and is, therefore, more communicative than 3. However, both students and teachers give higher (though not significantly higher)

ratings to Exercise 3 than to 1. For most of the respondents, Exercise 1 is too personalised, choice-free and creative. Some students say that they do not know what questions to ask while others are worried that time will be wasted in thinking of the right questions. Many teachers, similarly, believe that the focus of the practice is not clear and the objective of the lesson cannot be easily achieved compared with Exercise 3.

As we saw in Table 6.50 above, Exercise 3 was the most preferred in the students' rating. Of all the seven exercises, this is the only one whose context is outside school-life -- students are imagining that they are interpreters working with film journalists and actors and actresses! The following is the distribution of the students' rating:

Table 6.55: Distribution of students' ratings of Exercise 3

Group	Dislike					Like		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	1	2	11	33	31	29		107
2	2	4	11	30	44	18		109
3	2	5	9	26	20	19		81
Total	5	11	31	89	95	66		297
%	1.68	3.70	10.44	29.97	31.99	22.22		100

The table above indicates that more than half of the students give the exercise a 5/6-point rating. Many of the students say that they like this exercise very much

because the activity is interesting and because doing the exercise makes them feel as if they were likely to be interpreters very soon. The implication may be that students prefer activities which involve roles which the learners are likely to play in their future work.

If we consider the main differences between the communicative and the structural exercises discussed in Section 6.4.4 above, we can see that the three structure-oriented exercises are designed to be carried out by individuals and for practice purposes and that they are presented as mere exercises. By comparison, all the communication-oriented exercises are personalised and three of them (Exercise 1, 3, and 5) are intended as tasks rather than as mere exercises; besides, three of them (i.e., 1, 5 and 6) involve 'pair-/group-work' activity, which helps to make them more interactive. However, it seems that very few respondents recognise the underlying design principles or classroom methodology, as no respondents mentions them.

#### (4) Implications and conclusion

The results of the exercises suggest that although Chinese ELT is generally described as teacher-centred, textbook-centred, and grammar-centred (Tang 1984:41; Ting 1987:53), teachers and students alike may prefer communication-oriented exercises to structure-oriented ones. However, teachers view some of the exercises quite differently from their students; among their stated

reasons for their ratings are that imitation and pattern drills are necessary in learning and teaching a foreign language. On the other hand, the study suggests that not all meaning-focused grammar exercises are desirable in the teaching of grammar. The implication for materials writers and classroom teachers is that grammar exercises should be both structural and communicative, and this may lead to problems for the development of grammar teaching materials and classroom methodology. How can meaning-focusedness and form-focusedness be reconciled in practice? This is a question that syllabus designers, materials writers and classroom teachers have to consider once the particular teaching context is established.

#### 6.6.3 Implications

The findings of my survey have many implications for the design, implementation and evaluation of the proposed grammar course. The respondents' attitudes to lecture-based grammar teaching, memorisation of rules, and knowledge-giving imply that a more desirable way of grammar teaching may be learning-centred. The preference for fluency, communication-oriented activities and exercises shows that students believe that they are learning the language for communication, which implies that teaching activities should be task-based and meaning-focused rather than consisting of structural manipulation and form-focused. The respondents' opinions of the importance of different language courses and their

preference for interactive activities and meaning-focusedness suggest that they prefer a communicative approach to language teaching. The survey also shows that the teaching and learning of grammar is not expected to be always meaning-focused and choice-free. The implications for the design of the proposed grammar course can be summarised as follows:

(1) Grammar teaching and learning should be learning-centred as well as teaching-centred.

(2) Task-based and meaningful activities should be the primary focus of ELT.

(3) Grammar teaching should be grammar-specific.

From these implications may be drawn three design principles for the proposed grammar course: (1) learning-centred; (2) task-based; (3) grammar-specific, which will be discussed in detail in the following Chapter.

## 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter first discussed the design of the survey and then reported the results of the survey of GIFL (Chinese) teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions to the teaching of English in the Chinese context in general and to the teaching and learning of grammar in particular. The findings from the survey not only confirm the underlying assumptions stated in Section 6.2 but also suggest the desirability, feasibility and appropriacy of a communicative approach to grammar teaching and learning in the Chinese ELT context.

Part Three:

TOWARDS THE DESIGN OF CEGCCL

## CHAPTER 7: AN OUTLINE OF CEGCCL

### 7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters were concerned with two areas: (a) CLT and (b) the ELT situation in China in general and GIFL students' and teachers' attitudes and reaction to ELT (especially CLT and grammar teaching) in particular. Those chapters attempted to answer the first three research questions outlined in Section 0.3.1. Beginning from this chapter, the discussion will concentrate on both the implications of the findings of the survey discussed in Chapter 6 and the design of the proposed course. The three chapters in this last part will try to answer the last two research questions raised in Section 0.3.1, although the first one was partly answered in the preceding chapter: What are the implications of the survey? What should a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners be like?

The present chapter is an outline of CEGCCL. It will begin with the motivation for the design of the course, which will be followed by a discussion of the nature of the course. Then four different components of the course will be proposed and their relationships be examined. Finally, three general principles concerning the design of the course will be drawn from the discussion in the previous chapters and looked at with regard to the course components.



## 7.2 The Motivations for the Design of CEGCCL

From the discussion in the previous chapters it can be seen that there are many reasons (e.g., linguistic, educational, psycholinguistic, applied linguistic, sociolinguistic) for the design of a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners. In this section I shall argue for the design of the course by only looking at (a) the educational background and (b) the current situation of the Chinese ELT context.

### 7.2.1 The Educational Background

As was indicated in Chapter 5, the teaching and learning of English grammar in China has a very long history. Ever since the beginning of foreign language teaching, grammar has occupied a dominant position (Li et al 1988; Tang 1983; Wang 1981). As was pointed out in Sections 4.2 and 5.3, in China's national curriculum for English majors at university level, grammar (morphology and syntax) is treated as a separate compulsory course for students in their second year of the four/five year university programme (CNESSTE 1989, and Li et al 1988:429).

As was shown in the survey reported in Chapter 6, both GIFL teachers and students believe that grammar teaching still has an important role to play in the teaching and learning of English. It seems that Chinese educationalists, language planners, syllabus designers, classroom teachers, and students are all convinced that

the learning of grammar plays an indispensable role in learning and mastering a language.

#### 7.2.2 The Current Situation

As indicated in Section 5.8, GIFL is the birthplace of the first Chinese approach to CLT and the CECL core course is being used with the first/second-year English majors at GIFL and some other institutions. However, as was reported in Section 6.6, most of the GIFL teachers and students surveyed believe that there should be focused grammar teaching to go with the teaching of the CECL course not only because 'CECL contains no grammar' but also because the grammar course is in the curriculum. Their expectation of grammar teaching has been taken into serious consideration and a 'CECL grammar course', which is the proposed course, is being planned as a CECL sub-course (Section 5.8.1.7); this proposed course is part of the CECL Development Project. The grammar book (Thomson and Martinet 1980) now being used to complement the CECL course does not harmonise with the CECL core course because what it deals with is typically structural grammar, and it is, as was argued in Section 5.6.2.6, not a suitable course book to complement the CECL core course. However, although many teachers have realised the mismatch, they have to make do with it because the existing alternative grammar books available are more or less the same as Thomson and Martinet (1980). There are, of course, good communicative course books, but either

they are designed to develop general fluency rather than to focus on grammar points or they do not cover certain learning points that are essential for Chinese learners (as represented in CNESSTE 1989). Besides, these books are often socioculturally inappropriate to the Chinese context.

### 7.3 The Nature of CEGCCL

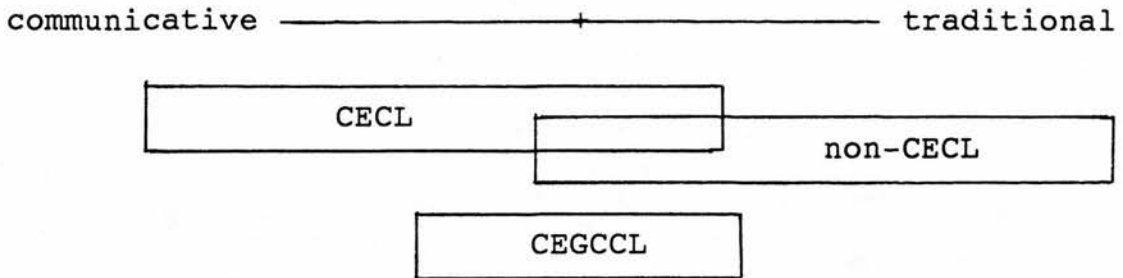
There are two issues to be discussed here: (a) CEGCCL is a remedial course; (b) CEGCCL is 'weak-version-oriented'.

(1) Basically, CEGCCL is a remedial course because its main content was covered in the secondary English course. A close comparison between the sub-syllabuses for grammar in CNESSTE (1989) and in ESCFSE (1986) (see Appendices 1 and 2) will support the argument here (see also Section 5.3).

(2) Taking the nature of grammar learning and that of the grammar course into consideration, CEGCCL will be an example of the 'weak version' of communicative language teaching (Howatt 1984:279). To put it in another way, CEGCCL is not so revolutionary that all of the characteristics of traditional language teaching are abandoned. In Section 5.8.3, the differences between the CECL core course and CEGCCL were discussed. If the CECL approach and a traditional approach (a Chinese approach to non-communicative language teaching) (see Section 5.8.2) are to be ranged on a continuum, the position of

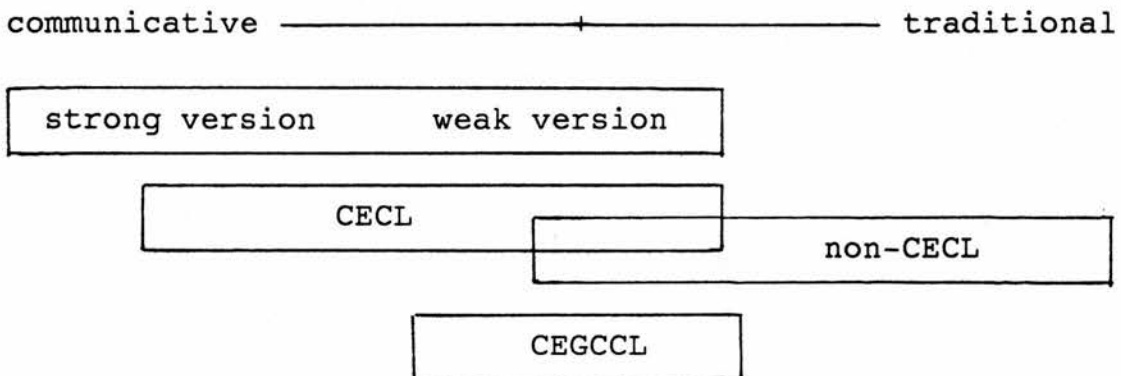
CEGCCL can be seen clearly.

Figure 7.1: The position of CEGCCL on the CECL--non-CECL continuum



Although the size of the 'blocks' in the above figure is relative and is a matter of unquantifiable conjecture, it can still be seen that CEGCCL occupies the middle ground of CLT and traditional language teaching. But why is CEGCCL still said to adopt a communicative approach rather than a traditional one? If Howatt's (1984:279) distinction between the 'strong version' and the 'weak version' of CLT (Section 2.3) is followed, then CEGCCL belongs to the weak version. The following diagram may help to illustrate the point:

Figure 7.2: The position of CEGCCL in relation to two versions of CLT



There are many reasons for arguing that CEGCCL is 'weak-version-oriented', some of which are drawn from the

results of the survey reported in Chapter 6. The following are three basic reasons: Firstly, because of the nature of grammar and grammar teaching and learning, usage, accuracy, and structural rules are important elements in the course. Secondly, compared with some of the courses (e.g., the Comprehensive English Course, 8 hours per week) in the national language teaching curriculum for English majors (CNESSTE 1989), the class time for the grammar course is very limited (2 hours per week). If there is no form-focused activity/content, the teaching plan/content outlined in CNESSTE (1989) cannot be covered and the grammar course would become a comprehensive one (and therefore would no longer be a grammar course). Lastly, from Chinese teachers' and students' responses to the exercises in the survey (Chapter 6), it can be seen that a totally communicative approach to grammar teaching is not perceived as desirable.

#### 7.4 The Components of CEGCCL

As was indicated earlier, CEGCCL will comprise a grammar course book and a reference grammar book. Therefore, there may be two different sets of elements and sub-elements within the proposed course. The focus of the present study is on the course book.

I propose to discuss four essential components of the proposed course: (a) approach (theoretical assumptions about language and learning), (b) design, (c)

procedure (Richards and Rodgers 1986:14-29), and (d) evaluation (Nunan 1988b:116).

#### 7.4.1 Approach

The theory of language underlying CEGCCL is the functional view, which assumes that language is a tool for communication. The view of learning, on the other hand, is that learning a language is learning how to use it, which is concerned with the development of a set of skills. The learning model, therefore, is a skill-learning one (Littlewood 1984, Johnson 1986, 1988b; see Section 2.4.2).

#### 7.4.2 Design

The second component of CEGCCL is the design, which is concerned with the objectives, the syllabus, the learning and teaching tasks and activities, the roles of learners and teachers, and the role of instructional materials.

##### 7.4.2.1 Objectives

Earlier in Section 5.6.2, a distinction between aims and objectives (Widdowson 1983) was made. It was pointed out that the aim of Stage-one Education stated in CNESSTE (1989) is also the aim of the grammar course. It was also indicated that there are no well-defined objectives for the grammar course and that the requirements of grammar listed in CNESSTE (1989:9) can be seen as the

objectives of the grammar course in the curriculum.

CEGCCL is intended to be a supplementary course of the CECL core course; it is for English majors in their second academic year in a four-year university course. Students at this stage have learned English for about seven years (six years in the secondary school and one year in the university) and have learned (though not necessarily mastered) the basic forms and usages of English grammar. Therefore, the chief objectives of the course are

- to help students review and 'activate' the grammatical items which they studied and to remedy their grammatical weaknesses,
- to highlight the communicative functions of the grammatical forms, and
- to provide students with opportunities to use forms which they have studied in meaningful, task-based activities.

By the end of the course, students should have a systematic knowledge of basic grammar and be able to use the forms covered in the course efficiently and correctly in expressing communicative functions in real-life communicative encounters. Therefore, the focus of the course is on the remediation of grammatical inaccuracy as well as on the use of the forms to express communicative functions. It is hoped that the course will not only consolidate students' knowledge of the language system and their use of the code, but also foster their ability



to use the code efficiently and appropriately in real-world communication.

#### 7.4.2.2 The syllabus

Although it may still be true that 'the issue of whether structures can and should be taught through a functional syllabus has remained unsolved' (Johnson 1982:128), the syllabus to be adopted by CEGCCL will be basically a functional one. As was indicated in Section 6.6.2.3, the result of the question concerning syllabus types in the survey shows that both teachers and students prefer the meaning-based principle to the form-based one in organising teaching content. This implies that a syllabus of the notional/functional type may be more attractive and appropriate for my proposed course book. Moreover, considering the aims, objectives and the nature of the course, I would argue that the course will be more successful if its syllabus is notional/functional rather than structural for three basic reasons. Firstly, because of its nature, a notional/functional syllabus organises its content by listing notions and functions and their realisations by forms, which means that the teaching content is more immediately relevant to learners' needs since once they have learnt it they can use it. In other words, a notional/functional syllabus has more 'high surrender value' (Wilkins 1976:69, Johnson 1982:82) than, for example, a structural one and it is easy to realise communicative aims by adopting a

notional/ functional rather than structural syllabus (Johnson 1981a:11; cf. Widdowson 1990:131). Secondly, a notional/functional syllabus is more appropriate for a remedial course (CEGCCL being one) than is a structural one (cf. Johnson 1978:33, 1982:115, Wilkins 1981:84). Thirdly, a notional/functional syllabus carries more implications for a communicative teaching methodology than a structural syllabus because the former reflects a communicative view of language (see Section 3.5).

If Johnson's (1982:116) distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' claims for the notional/functional syllabus is followed, then the CEGCCL syllabus (see Appendix 6) belongs to the 'weak' claim because it is a syllabus which stresses the functional dimension of structures.

#### (1) The syllabus and objectives

The first step in the construction of a syllabus is to define learning objectives and goals (Wilkins 1976:55, Nunan 1988a:24). The choice of syllabus type and the selection and gradation of content are all related to the objectives. In other words, 'a syllabus must be goal-directed' and 'its main justification is that it enables a learner to achieve certain objectives' (Brumfit 1981c:90). The choice of a notional/functional syllabus for the proposed course is also based on consideration of the objectives and the learners' needs and expectations as well as the course designer's understanding of the need to teach students to use language communicatively.

## (2) The selection and gradation

In the process of selection of content in CEGCCL, choices will be made of the language functions and of language forms which can be used to express the functions. The decision-making about the selection of content in CEGCCL will be based on three resources: (a) the national syllabus (especially the inventories of grammatical forms and functions and notions) (CNESSTE 1989:32-88); (b) the syllabus of the CECL core course; and (c) reference grammars (and syllabuses) such as Leech and Svartvik (1975), Alexander et al 1975, van Ek and Alexander (1980), Zhang et al (1981-3), Quirk et al (1972, 1985), and Sinclair et al (1990). The main selection principle is one of 'utility', and the way of deciding what to select is to consider what is to be omitted: items which are not frequently used (i.e., based on linguistic analysis), or which are less likely to be needed (i.e., based on target needs analysis), or which are less useful in the learning process (i.e., based on learning needs analysis) can be omitted (cf. Gibbons 1984:141-42). As was suggested in Section 3.2.4, it would be ideal if the selection and gradation could be carried out by a group of teachers who are familiar both with the educational context and with underlying assumptions and principles of selection and gradation.

It must be pointed out that with a revision course such as CEGCCL, gradation can be dispensed with, because students have, literally, learned or encountered all the

grammatical forms. The proposed course is concerned with what Johnson (1982:94) calls 're-representation' rather than initial introduction of grammatical structures. Moreover, as Littlewood (1981:77) points out, 'a communicative approach to the content of a course need not involve abandoning the use of structural criteria for selection and sequencing'. Therefore, two general principles concerning gradation may be useful: (a) the items that are easy to learn should come first; (b) the most frequent patterns and generalisations should come first (Greenbaum 1987:195), although studies on second language acquisition provide evidence that some forms are linguistically easy but are acquired in a late stage (cf. Gibbons 1984:137-41). Besides, the gradation of CEGCCL items will also depend on consideration of (a) the national syllabus (especially the inventory of grammatical forms), (b) the CECL syllabus (because grammar learning is complementary to the CECL core course); and (c) the treatment of grammatical complexity in pedagogical grammars.

As the main component of the proposed course book is the task, the issues of selecting and grading learning tasks are also worth discussing. In CEGCCL, both pedagogic and real-world tasks will be used, the former focusing on form and the latter on meaning and use. The selection is based on (a) the understanding of the components and levels of communicative competence discussed in Sections 1.6 and 1.7, (b) the nature of

grammar teaching dealt with in Chapter 4, and (c) the GIFL teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions reported in Section 6.6.2. Gradation of tasks, on the other hand, will be determined by factors such as goals, input, activity, participants (cf. Nunan 1989a:96-116). The gradation of tasks leads to the issue of 'task continuity' which is concerned with 'the chaining of activities together to form a sequence, in which the successful completion of prior activities is a prerequisite for succeeding ones' (Nunan op. cit.:119) (cf. the 'task dependency principle' in Johnson 1982, see Section 2.7.2). In CEGCCL, the sequence of tasks is usually (but not necessarily, as can be seen in the sample materials in Appendix 7) as follows: (a) pre-tasks, (b) form-focused tasks, (c) meaning-focused tasks, (d) use-based tasks (cf. Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:122; Ur 1988:6-7; Celce-Murcia and Hilles 1988:27-8; Brumfit 1979a:183; Littlewood 1981:85-7; Prabhu 1987:27).

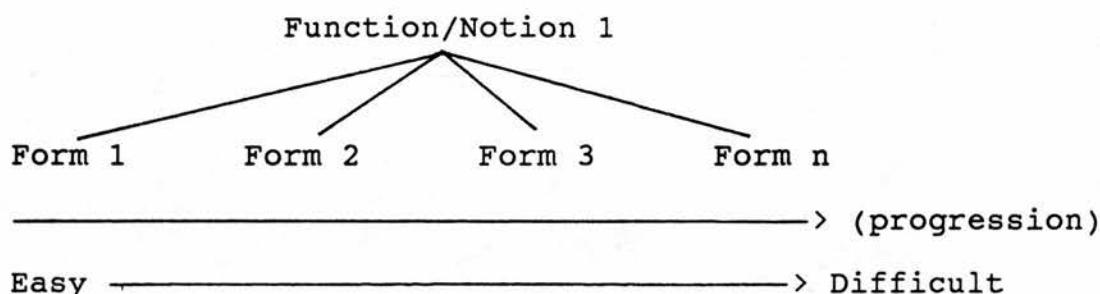
### (3) The matching

The term 'matching' is used to refer to (a) the process of arranging linguistic forms to realise notions/functions and (b) the treatment of forms under different notional/functional headings. As was indicated in Section 3.4, one function can be realised by many different forms, and one form can be used to express different functions. The problem that confronts the syllabus designer is how to reconcile the imbalance of

the matching. The criteria and principles concerning the selection and gradation discussed earlier are applicable to solving this problem. If there are more than two forms which can be used to express the same function, usually the (linguistically) easier one comes first. For example, in the provisional CEGCCL syllabus (Appendix 6), the broad function 'expressing time' is to be realised by different tenses under notional headings such as 'the present time', 'the past time', 'the future time'. Under 'the present time' the simple present tense and the present progressive tense are treated. The gradation of forms under a heading is usually based on the linguistic criterion 'simplicity'. For example, both the simple present tense and the present progressive tense can be used to express the notion 'present time'; because the former is linguistically simpler than the latter, it is treated before the latter. The decision-making is usually based on the treatment of these tenses in pedagogical grammars (e.g., Eckersley and Eckersley 1960, Leech 1971, Zhang et al 1981-3, Sinclair et al 1990). However, one may argue that some syntactically simpler forms are more difficult to learn than other forms which are syntactically complex. For example, Pienemann and Johnston (1987) point out that although the rule for using the third person singular '-s' in the simple present tense is fairly simple grammatically it is very difficult in terms of speech processing (i.e., the load it puts on the learner's short-term memory) (cited in

Nunan 1989a:97). As CEGCCL is a remedial course, this issue is not relevant, because the focus of the course is on the functional use of the forms. The general principle adopted in the design of the provisional CEGCCL syllabus is that within the same notional/functional heading, simple forms are treated earlier than the complex ones. The following diagram may illustrate the point:

Figure 7.3: Selection and gradation of forms



Although within each functional heading of the provisional CEGCCL syllabus there are structural items which, because of their gradation, look like those in a structural syllabus, the rationale of the CEGCCL syllabus is significantly different from that of a structural syllabus, because in the former structures are to be included because they are useful means to a communicative end, whereas in the latter structures are to be taught because they are part of the language system (cf. Johnson 1982:59-60).

There is a distinction to be made between a linear syllabus and a spiral (cyclical) one (Corder 1973:296-8; Howatt 1974:19-20; Martin 1978; cf. Wilkins 1976:59); the latter is more pedagogically attractive because it is



believed that the adoption of a spiral syllabus reflects the overall pattern of second language growth (Howatt 1974:20; Davies et al 1984:330). According to the spiral feature, the same form/notion/function can be treated in different places. In the CEGCCL syllabus, there are reflections of this spiral feature. For example, 'demonstrative pronouns' are first treated under the broad function 'referring to people and things' because they can be used to help realise this function (e.g., 'I don't like that book.' 'This is a list of the rules.'). Demonstrative pronouns are treated again under the broad function 'making texts' because they are used in discourse to refer to items (or whole sentences/utterances) in the preceding or following text (e.g., 'They broke a Chinese vase. That was valuable.' 'They broke a Chinese vase. That was careless.' -- Halliday and Hasan 1976:66).

#### (4) Concluding remarks

As was argued in Sections 2.3.4 and 3.5, whether a syllabus will help learners to acquire communicative skills largely depends on how it is reflected and implemented in materials development and classroom teaching rather than on how it is organised, although the syllabus typology will affect and influence the methodology. It can be argued here that it is difficult to design a syllabus which will cover all the language forms and functions that the learner will need in his

communicative encounters in real-world interactions, no matter how specific the information from and about the learner and how detailed the task analysis (in the sense of Nunan 1988a:18-9), because what the teaching does is only half of the picture -- learners are to deal with the other half themselves (cf. Holec 1980:27, Richards 1990:42). Therefore, the main task for the syllabus designer is to specify the semantic content of the CEGCCL syllabus and to specify how the content may be best realised according to the given teaching context and his views and understanding of language teaching in that context.

#### 7.4.2.3 Tasks and activities

The concept of 'tasks' and task components were discussed in Section 2.6, where 'activity' was regarded as a component of a task. There are four types of teaching/learning tasks in CEGCCL (i.e., pre-tasks, form-focused tasks, meaning-focused tasks, and use-based tasks), which will be dealt with and exemplified in Chapter 8. There are basically two types of activities in CEGCCL -- the practice activity and the transfer activity (see Section 2.6.3.3). The tasks and activities are designed to focus on grammatical forms and to practise using the target language in communicative encounters. The users' attitudes to different task/activity/exercise types (already discussed in Section 6.6) will be taken into careful consideration in the

design and writing of classroom tasks and activities.

#### 7.4.2.4 Roles of teachers and learners

The roles of teachers and learners within a task were discussed in detail in Section 2.6.3.4; and it was pointed out that 'role' has a narrow sense (when regarded as a task component) as well as a broad one. 'Role' used in its broad meaning is an essential factor in any educational programme (cf. Widdowson 1987b). Generally speaking, different teaching methods/approaches require different teacher roles and learner roles, as fully illustrated in Richards and Rodgers (1986).

As is summarised by Richards and Rodgers (op. cit.:24), teacher roles are related to the following issues: (a) the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil; (b) the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place; (c) the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught; and (d) the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners. The teacher roles are related to assumptions about the nature of language and learning and other elements in the design and procedure components. According to Breen and Candlin (1980:99), Richards and Rodgers (op. cit:77-9) and Nunan (1989a:84-6, 194-5; cf. Yalden 1987a:57-8), in CLT the main roles of the classroom teacher are: facilitator of the communication process, participant in tasks, guide, and process manager. By contrast, Harmer (1983:201)

suggests that, in ELT in general, with different classroom activities the role of the teacher can be controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant, or resource. I would also argue that in any teaching programme, communicative or otherwise, 'teacher' (one who gives knowledge, skill, training, etc. to the learner) is one of the roles. It cannot be overemphasised that the teacher has a decisive role to play when the classroom teaching methodology is intended to be dynamic and participant(teacher/learner)-oriented, because the teacher is expected to modify the instructional materials as well as the underlying teaching strategies/techniques according to the given situation and because it is the teacher who has the most direct influence on the teaching process in the class (cf. Andrews 1983:129).

Like teacher roles, learner roles vary according to the different assumptions about language and learning, different teaching methods and approaches, different teaching techniques and strategies, and different tasks/activities, among other things (see Richards and Rodgers op. cit.:23; Nunan op. cit.:79-84). It is often believed that the typical learner roles in CLT are: negotiator and interactor. However, it must be remembered that in any teaching situation learners always have the inherent 'learner' role.

Learner roles and teacher roles are closely related. Giving the learner a certain role requires the teacher to adopt a different role as the two roles are complemen-

tary. However, as was observed by Nunan (op. cit.:84), 'there is [often] a mismatch between the role perception of the teacher and the learner'. For example, as we saw in Section 5.4, many Chinese students may like teachers to act as 'knowledge-providers', organisers, and/or 'models' rather than facilitators, participants, and/or guides. Some of the roles of the teacher and learners in CEGCCL will be different from those in the traditional classroom (e.g., those discussed in Section 5.6) and they will be further illustrated in Chapter 9.

#### 7.4.2.5 The role of the material

The role of teaching materials, to a large extent, reflects decisions concerning (a) their primary goal, (b) their form, (c) their relation to other sources of input, and (d) the abilities of teachers (Richards and Rodgers 1986:25). The primary goal of CEGCCL materials is to present grammatical content, to practise content, to facilitate communication between learners and between the teacher and learners. The form of the materials is a textbook, which is the major input in the classroom, and a reference book. The textbook materials consist of different kinds/types of task which the learners can use to develop their communicative skills.

#### 7.4.3 Procedure

'Procedure' covers classroom techniques, strategies and practices; it focuses on the presentation, practice,

and feedback phases of moment-to-moment classroom teaching. At the level of procedure there are three dimensions: (a) the use of teaching tasks/activities to present language and to clarify and demonstrate formal, communicative, or other aspects of the target language, (b) the ways in which particular teaching tasks/activities are used for practising language, and (c) the procedures and techniques used in giving feedback to learners' production in terms of form and content (Richards and Rodgers 1986:26).

The procedure in CEGCCL is process-oriented in that the techniques and strategies of presentation of language, facilitation of practice, and feedback-giving are idiosyncratic in nature. That is, the teacher will decide which technique/strategy is best and most appropriate in his class according to the particular teaching context. This means that classroom teaching methodology is dynamic, and participant(teacher/learner)-oriented. The general procedural phases of instruction within the CEGCCL approach will be discussed in Section 9.3.

#### 7.4.4 Evaluation

Although evaluation in CEGCCL is underpinned by the approach, it is more concerned with the other two components (i.e., design and procedure); for example, whether the objectives are attained, whether the syllabus type, the type of tasks/activities, the roles of the

teacher and learners, and the classroom techniques and strategies, etc. will facilitate the learning/acquisition and development of learners' communicative skills are questions that are of most interest in the evaluation process.

Since the course is still at the proposal stage, it cannot yet be evaluated. However, as a course designer, I can foresee that the success of the course in the implementation stage will depend on many factors, some of which are: (a) the writing of course materials; (b) the piloting of the materials; and (c) the design of valid and reliable tests.

As the writing of the CEGCCL materials is part of the CECL Development Project sponsored jointly by GIFL and the British Council, it would be ideal if the materials writing were done by a group of teachers, both Chinese and British; the combined effort is more likely to produce high-quality materials, because the Chinese are familiar with the teaching context whereas the British have native-speaker competence in the learners' target language.

The piloting of the course materials is a necessary step to future success. It is desirable that the materials writers be involved in the classroom teaching during the piloting. It would be a good idea if an experiment involving an experimental group and a control group were conducted at certain stages of the piloting.

The design of tests is also an important issue. It



is an undeniable fact that many students are learning in order to pass the test. Although there are arguments (e.g., Oller 1979) that non-communicative tests such as cloze and dictation (which are global integrative) correlate highly with communicative tests, there is still a tendency to prefer 'discrete point' tests (Davies 1978/1982) to integrative tests. It may be the case that the proposed course cannot be successful if the test used to evaluate non-CEGCCL learners is also used to assess the CEGCCL learners. Therefore, the tests used to assess CEGCCL learners's performance should consist of both discrete point tests and integrative tests.

There are different dimensions involved in conducting an evaluation, for example, (a) formative or summative (Does evaluation take place during the development of the course or at the end of it?), (b) product or process (Is the evaluation focused on the goal of the programme or what is going on in the programme?), quantitative or qualitative (Are the measures concerned with numbers and statistics or not?) (Brown 1989). The measures and procedures of evaluation for CEGCCL will be of four types: (1) Classroom observations, which enable the observer to look at the classroom processes and examine whether the actual teaching reflects the underlying assumptions, the teaching principles, procedures and techniques described; this kind of evaluation takes place while the course is being

implemented in the classroom (Chaudron 1988, Nunan 1989b). (2) Tests, which assess learners' language performance; this kind of evaluation takes place at the end of the course. The former way of measurement is process-oriented whereas the latter product-oriented. (3) Questionnaires, which investigate issues concerning all the components of CEGCCL, from basic assumptions about the nature of language and language learning to the design, procedure, and evaluation used; this kind of evaluation can take place in the middle of the course or at the end of it. (4) Interviews and meetings, which take place during and at the end of the course. They provide opportunities for materials writers to hear participants' opinions, reactions, and expectations. Participants in the evaluation include students, classroom teachers, the course designer, materials writers, and other teachers who are not involved in the planning, design and implementation of the course.

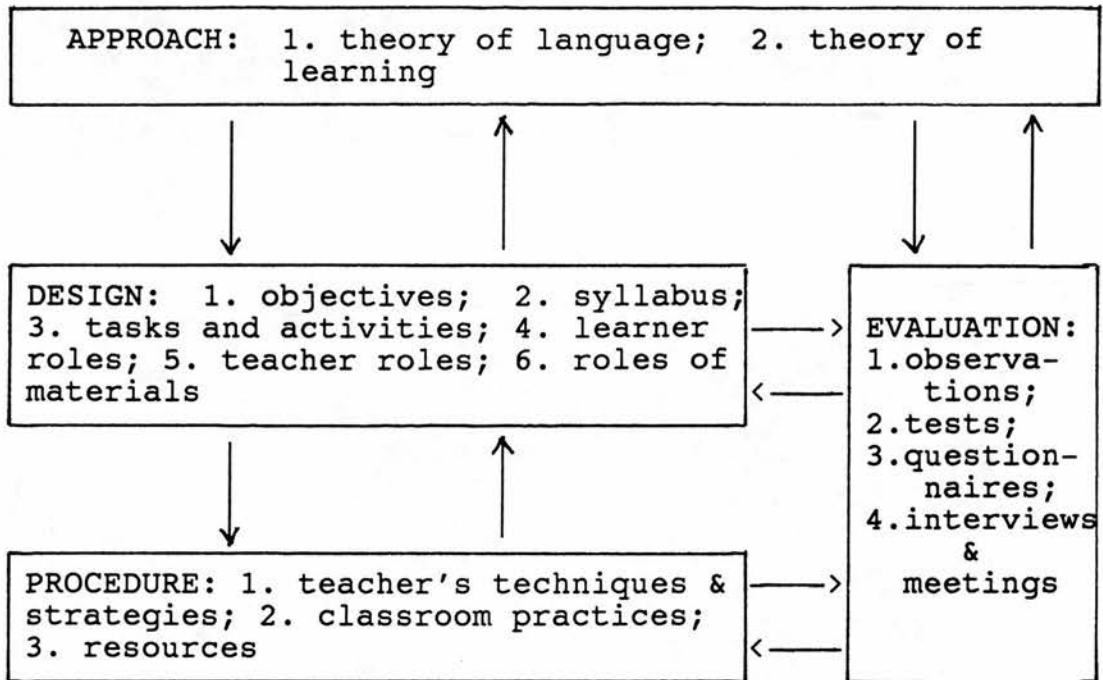
It should be pointed out that evaluation of any kind should be underpinned by the theory of language and the theory of learning and that tests should relate directly to the objectives of the course (see Carroll 1980:7-8; Nunan 1988b:117).

#### 7.4.5 Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, the four components described above are interrelated and they together form a composite whole. The component concerning the theory of language and the

theory of learning serves as a basis for the other three components, which in turn reflect the theoretical assumptions. The relationship between the components and their elements can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 7.4: The components of CEGCCL



Although the design of any language teaching programme involves not only the development and use of the instructional materials and teaching techniques but also external considerations such as cultural factors, general educational factors, and administrative factors (Maley 1984b), the components of CEGCCL discussed here are only concerned with the internal elements of the course.

## 7.5 The General Principles of CEGCCL

Taking into consideration the following three aspects: (a) the nature, the aim, the content, the requirements, the teaching principles laid down in CNESSTE (1989) (see Section 5.3), (b) GIFL teachers' and students' attitudes and reactions to the ways to learn English, classroom groupings and activities, the importance of a 'CECL grammar', the teaching and learning of grammar, the design of grammar teaching materials, the communicative and non-communicative exercises, and the implications drawn from their responses (see Section 6.6), and (c) the theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and learning and other aspects of the components of CEGCCL (see Sections 7.3 and 7.4), I would propose that three general principles be incorporated into the design of CEGCCL: (a) learning-centred, (b) task-based, and (c) grammar-specific.

It is possible to illustrate these three principles in relation to all the components of CEGCCL, but I shall concentrate only on the components of 'design' and 'procedure' because they are the focus of the present discussion, although the theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and that of learning, and the evaluation are closely related to these principles.

### 7.5.1 The Learning-centred Principle

The characteristics of 'learning-centredness' were briefly discussed in Section 2.5.2. Before the idea of

'learning-centredness' is discussed further, it is useful to make a distinction between 'learner-centred' and 'learning-centred'.

#### 7.5.1.1 Learner-centred and learning-centred

As the term 'learner-centred' means different things to different people, it is necessary to say what I understand by 'learner-centred'. The idea of learner-centredness came to be used in language teaching through a humanistic approach (e.g., Rogers 1951, Stevick 1976, 1980), which 'put[s] the learner at the heart of the learning process' (Brandes and Ginnis 1986:1) and emphasises active learner involvement at all stages of the learning process, from decision-making (e.g., curriculum development) to actual classroom learning. The idea of negotiation in language learning is closely related to the concept of 'learner-centredness', because it is believed that in a learner-centred learning programme course designers, materials writers, and classroom teachers should negotiate with the learner in terms of aims, objectives, needs, wishes, desires, syllabus types (if any) (e.g., process-oriented or product-oriented), learning activities, etc. It is usually believed that learner-centred learning assumes that learning is totally determined by the learner; therefore, the role of the teacher may not be very important because the responsibility for language learning is believed to rest on the learner rather than

on the teacher (cf. Ur 1990:21). The ultimate goal of learner-centred learning is the autonomous learner and individualisation (Prabhu 1985:165). Besides, learner-centredness carries sociological and ideological implications which suggest that learners take the initiative for learning as a realisation of their own personal construct (cf. Quirk and Widdowson 1985:178). Learner-centredness also assumes that language is best learned by the learner's active engagement in doing tasks/activities when his attention is focused on meaning (cf. Brumfit 1985, Prabhu 1985, Dickinson 1987, Nunan 1988b; also see Hutchinson and Waters 1987). In short, learner-centredness means that the learner plays a decisive role in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of a learning programme. It is the learner who should be the centre of programme planning and classroom practice. The converse of learner-centredness is teacher-centredness, which suggests that in the teaching and learning process the teacher (course designer, materials writer) makes most of the decisions about the programme.

Learning-centredness, by contrast, is mainly concerned with the 'design' and 'procedure' (Richards and Rodgers 1986) elements. It does not deny the role of the teacher, nor does it necessarily suggest negotiation between the teacher (course designer, materials writer) and the learner about elements such as aims, objectives, syllabus types, task/activity types, although the

learner's needs, desires, wishes and expectations are often taken into consideration when decisions are being made; its aim is not to achieve learner autonomy, because the role of the teacher is essential in the learning process. Unlike learner-centredness, learning-centredness does not determine the decision-making process although it affects/influences it. Learning-centredness shares with learner-centredness the assumption that language is best learned by the learner's active engagement in doing tasks/activities when his attention is focused on meaning (Quirk and Widdowson 1985:178). Learning-centredness is based on the understanding that teaching does not necessarily lead to learning and that teaching should facilitate learning. The idea of learning-centredness can be used and incorporated in the development of instructional materials and the employment of classroom techniques and strategies. The opposite of 'learning-centred' is 'teaching-centred'. The difference between 'teacher-centred' and 'teaching-centred' is similar to that between 'learner-centred' and 'learning-centred'.

To conclude, 'learner-centred' and 'teacher-centred' are wider concepts than the corresponding 'learning-centred' and 'teaching-centred', because the former terms are concerned with the whole process of pedagogy (e.g., from curriculum development to classroom learning) whereas the latter terms are only concerned with implementational matters (i.e., 'design' and 'procedure'.



in the sense of Richards and Rodgers 1986). The choice of 'learning-centred' rather than 'learner-centred' reflects my understanding that the whole point of pedagogy is to short-circuit the slow process of natural discovery and to make arrangements for learning to take place more easily and effectively (Widdowson 1990:162) (cf. Sampson 1984:26). My preference for 'learning-centred' indicates that the change in the new approach happens at the level of implementation rather than at the level of decision-making (curriculum development). The term 'learner-centred' is avoided where possible because it seems that there is no true learner-centred learning although there is teacher-centred teaching.

#### 7.5.1.2 The learning-centred principle in the design

The different elements in the design component can be taken into consideration in line with this principle. The objective, for example, is in accordance with the assumption that skills and knowledge are taught because learners wish to utilise them for some purpose beyond the learning environment itself (Nunan 1988b:42). The choice of syllabus is related to factors such as who the learners are, why they need to learn English, what they need to learn, where their difficulties lie and what learning has taken (or is taking) place. The choice of types of learning and teaching tasks and activities and their development are also affected by this principle. For example, there should be a certain amount of

learning-centred activities (which will be discussed in Chapters 8 and 9) in CEGCCL. The roles of the teacher and learners and that of the instructional materials should also be in accordance with learning-centred learning.

In the development of instructional materials and the explanation of linguistic (usage) and pragmatic (use) rules, attention should be paid to the learner's sociocultural and educational background. The choice of language forms, the size and density of the texts used, the content and format of the texts, and the way of presenting rules are all related to learner factors.

#### 7.5.1.3 The learning-centred principle in the procedure

Learning-centredness is realised in many ways in the classroom. In communication-oriented activities, learners are communicators rather than bystanders. Their readiness and motivation are very important in performing the classroom activity. The learners play an active role in the communicative tasks and activities in the classroom, instead of sitting silently and listening to the teacher explaining rules. Very often they work either on their own or with one another to find out grammatical facts, and are expected to discover rules rather than to be given them. The teacher should consider the students' learning pace and learning styles, and recognise learner differences. The teacher's classroom techniques and strategies are aimed at both the

facilitation of interaction and development of the learners' communicative skills.

### 7.5.2 The Task-based Principle

The idea of task-basedness was briefly discussed in Section 2.5.2. As Richards et al (1985:289) point out, the use of a variety of different types of task in the learning process makes learning more interactive and communicative, since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. This principle is in accordance with a communicative view of language and the theory of language learning underlying CLT (see Section 2.4). The realisation of this principle in the design of the task and in the classroom activity will be discussed in the following two chapters. It must be pointed out that although tasks can be both communicative and non-communicative (see Section 2.6.2), throughout the discussion, the term 'task-based' carries the implication of 'communicatively task-based' (see Section 2.6.1).

#### 7.5.2.1 The task-based principle in the design

As one of the objectives of CEGCCL is to provide students with opportunities to use the forms in meaningful, meaning-focused activities, the design of the learning tasks/activities and the roles of the teacher and learners as well as the role of the instructional material should help to achieve this objective. This

principle is a useful guideline in the selection of language input and in the design of task requirements.

According to this principle any linguistic description in the instructional materials should be as meaning-focused and contextualised as possible. Explanation can be made available through tasks -- instead of giving the rule to the learners we can so design tasks that by doing them learners can discover it themselves.

#### 7.5.2.2 The task-based principle in the procedure

In order to ensure that students are learning to use the language rather than learning about the language, the classroom procedures should aim at the development of learners' communicative skills. Teachers' use of classroom techniques and strategies should facilitate learners' performance of tasks. Very often, students are not required to do mechanical drills, but to use English to carry out tasks.

#### 7.5.3 The grammar-specific principle

Considering the nature of language learning and that of the grammar course, this principle is essential in the design of the proposed course. As was indicated in Section 6.6, my survey shows that the GIFL teachers and students do not expect the learning of grammar to be totally choice-free, integrative, or meaning-focused. This suggests the importance of the grammar-specific

principle in the design of CEGCCL. It is this principle which ensures that the course is grammar-based. This is the main principle that distinguishes CEGCCL from CECL.

#### 7.5.3.1 The grammar-specific principle in the design

As the main objective of CEGCCL is to offer review and remedy, some of the tasks/activities should be form-focused. In the selection of teaching content, this principle is the main criterion. It also determines the selection and gradation of many language items (see Section 7.4.2.2). Under this principle decontextualised and form-focused activities are also expected in the description/explanation and the task. Sometimes the focus of the description and that of the task may be on usage and discrete grammar points.

#### 7.5.3.2 The grammar-specific principle in the procedure

According to this principle, classroom practice can sometimes be structural rather than communicative, mechanical rather than interactive. Both communicative and non-communicative tasks/activities are of great importance in classroom learning. Some of the practice materials may be accuracy-based and form-focused. In certain stages of classroom teaching, the class/activity is teaching-centred.

#### 9.5.4 Relationships Between the Principles

As early as the early 1980s, it was realised that

'it is difficult simultaneously to design a course which is both structurally systematic and functionally coherent' (White 1983:9). Similarly, the problem of reconciling the three proposed principles in the design of a grammar course is very complicated. As CEGCCL is intended to be a communicative grammar course, both communicative (i.e., learning-centred, task-based) and structural (i.e., grammar-specific) principles are relevant in the design, implementation and evaluation. Although the three principles may not always harmonise and may even be in conflict in certain aspects, in practice they function at different times and levels. In a communication-based course, it is not unusual to integrate the grammatical and the communicative features, because 'one of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language' (Littlewood 1981:1). Revell argues that the problem of integrating the communicative and the grammatical aspects can be solved by saying that

It is not possible to deal successfully with the communicative and the linguistic aspect at one and the same time, but the two can be integrated by a constant change of focus: when one is brought into prominence, the other temporarily blurs into the background. (Revell 1979:90)

Revell's suggestion on reconciling the communicative and the grammatical aspects is a very useful guideline in the writing of CEGCCL materials. As to the implementation of the course in the classroom, at different stages the

focus moves from one principle to another. There is no predetermined sequence of the employment of the three principles. The sequence of the focus may be like what Brumfit (1979a:183) describes as traditional procedures: structural --> communicative; equally, it may be the other way round: communicative --> structural. Or it may be a combination of the two: communicative --> structural --> communicative --> ... or structural --> communicative --> structural --> ... For example, in the sample materials (Students' Book, see Appendix 7), the focus of the first phase of Task 1 is on the communicative aspect and those of the second and third phases are on the structural aspect. The two phases of Task 2 are meaning-focused whereas the focus of Task 3 is on form (grammatical concept). The realisation of one or more of the principles is based on the nature of the task and the intention behind it.

To conclude, although the three general principles of CEGCCL are seemingly contradictory, they are in fact in harmony with each other because they function at different times and levels; they form the basis of a course which is not only communication-based but also grammar-based. That is the main feature of CEGCCL.

## 7.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with the arguments for the design of the proposed course by looking at the reasons from two perspectives: (a) the educational context, and (b) the



current situation. Then the nature of the proposed course was discussed. After that, four components in CEGCCL were proposed: (a) the theoretical assumptions about language and learning, (b) the design, (c) the procedure, and (d) the evaluation, each of which is made up of different elements. Finally, three general principles concerning the design of CEGCCL (i.e., 'learning-centred', 'task-based', and 'grammar-specific') were suggested and examined in terms of 'design' and 'procedure'.

The following two chapters will deal with the issue of task examples and the CEGCCL methodology respectively.

## CHAPTER 8: AN ANALYSIS OF TASKS

### 8.1 Introduction

The concept of 'task' was discussed in Section 2.6. This chapter will look at some sample task types within the proposed course. It will begin with examples of the four proposed task types. This will be followed by an analysis of sample tasks, reflecting the underlying assumptions of the nature of language and language learning as well as the methodology underlying the 'design' and 'procedure' of CEGCCL.

There are four types of task in CEGCCL: (a) Pre-tasks; (b) Form-focused tasks; (c) Meaning-focused tasks; (d) Use-based tasks. Generally speaking, pre-tasks and meaning-focused tasks can be real-world or pedagogic tasks, form-focused tasks are usually pedagogic tasks, and use-based tasks are often real-world tasks, as will be shown in the examples analysed below.

### 8.2 The Pre-task

Pre-tasks potentially have 'diagnostic value' (Johnson 1982:196) and they are for warm-up purposes. The main aims of the task are (cf. Li et al 1987b:xiii):

- (1) to let students 'review' what they have previously studied;
- (2) to elicit from students the relevant information about the language form to be focused on and practised;

- (3) to give the teacher a chance to see what students already know and are able to do (and what they do not know and/or are unable to do), so that he can adjust the amount of explanation and feedback and/or change his teaching plan; or
- (4) to arouse students' interest and curiosity.

The following are two examples of pre-tasks.

-----

Task A:

Work in groups. When you want to express something that happens/will happen in the future you can use auxiliaries such as 'shall' and 'will', for example:

I shall/will go to see my sister tomorrow.

There are a number of other ways of expressing future events and states in English. With your group members write down as many expressions as possible, with examples, of future time. Then try to find out the difference(s) between them. You will be asked to report your group work to the class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 ...

-----

This task is designed to let students 'review' what they have learned or know about the ways of expressing future events/states, to give the teacher a chance to see how many ways they have learned or know of, and to draw their attention to the differences between different expressions. This task is for warm-up purposes; it can be carried out before the differences between the ways of expressing future events and states are introduced or

before the different ways are highlighted.

---

#### Task B:

Work in pairs. Look at the cartoons (Evening News, March 22, 1990) and then decide why the boy asks his father the questions.



This task can be used before the students' attention is drawn to the habitual use of the simple present tense. It does not matter whether the students can work out the reason(s) for the boy's questions as the main purpose is to arouse their interest and curiosity.

### 8.3 The Form-focused Task

Form-focused tasks are pedagogic tasks which aim at developing learners' mastery of the forms necessary for communication. In this type of task, learners are required to display their control over the forms of the language rather than their ability to use the language in communication. Most traditional exercises share this aim. The following are two examples.

-----

Task C:

Match the clauses in Column A with those in Column B.

- | A   | B  |
|---|--|
| 1) Unless air traffic is closely controlled | a. since I fell ill                            |
| 2) He walked ahead                          | b. flying is relatively safe                   |
| 3) He has written to me frequently          | c. John never forgets to do physical exercises |
| 4) Although he is very busy                 | d. but he writes to me every month             |
| 5) John doesn't like writing letters        | e. since he knew the way better                |
| 6) Where air traffic is closely controlled  | f. flying is relatively unsafe.                |

Solution: 1)\_\_\_\_, 2)\_\_\_\_, 3)\_\_\_\_, 4)\_\_\_\_, 5)\_\_\_\_, 6)\_\_\_\_.

-----

This task requires students to make decisions on the choice of conjunctions. Many of the choices here depend on the correct usage of grammatical rules, because the choice of one word (e.g., conjunction) in one column leads to the choice of another in the other column. For example, 'unless' in '1)' determines the choice of 'f' (... unsafe), not 'b' (... safe), whereas the choice of 'where' in '6)' leads to the choice of 'b', not 'f'. Another example is the impossible match of '3)' and 'd': ' \*He has written to me frequently but he writes to me every month.'; as the propositions in both clauses are similar, there is no reason to conjoin them with a conjunction of 'contrast'. It is possible that students will match '4' with 'd' (\*Although he is very busy but he writes to me every month.) because in Chinese 'although' ( 虽然 ) and 'but' ( 但是 ) are always used as a pair (correlative conjunction). This task is challenging in

that it involves not only the usage and collocation of conjunctions (e.g., 'since' introduces a time-clause in 'a' but a reason-clause in 'e') but also the contrast between L1 and L2 (e.g., the wrong match of 'although' and 'but').

-----

Task D (adapted from Zhang et al 1983:115-6):

Work in pairs. Ask each other the following questions, using complete sentences or more than one sentence if necessary:

1. How many weeks' annual holiday do students in your university usually have?
  2. How do you spend your holiday?
  3. What do you usually do on Sunday each week?
  4. What does your father do for a living?
  - ...
- 

The purpose of this task is to require students to practise the usage of the simple present tense. However, the phrase 'using complete sentences' in the instruction may encourage students to produce 'textbook English'. The designer(s) of the exercise may hope that students will produce sentences like the following:

- (1) Students in our university usually have twelve weeks' annual holiday.
- (2) I usually go back to my home town to see my parents.

In real communication, however, it is more normal and appropriate to answer question 1 by saying '(usually) twelve weeks' than by saying (1) above. Therefore, this task is form-focused.

#### 8.4 The Meaning-focused Task

Meaning-focused tasks emphasise meaning rather than form. When students are doing the task, their attention is usually directed to and focused on meaning, not form. The following are three examples.

-----

##### Task E:

A. Work in groups. First look at the sentences and then answer the questions.

- (a) 1. I haven't seen John this morning.

Q: Is it morning when you say this? Yes/No

2. I didn't see John this morning.

Q: Is it morning when you say this? Yes/No

3. She has read two novels this summer.

Q: Is it still summer? Yes/No

4. She read two novels this summer.

Q: Is it still summer? Yes/No

5. Her brother has been an invalid all his life.

Q: Is he still alive? Yes/No

6. Her brother was an invalid all his life.

Q: Is he still alive? Yes/No

- (b) 1. He has lived in China for ten years.

Q: Is he still living in China? Yes/No/Maybe

2. He lived in China for ten years.

Q: Is he still living in China? Yes/No/Maybe

3. She has gone to see John.



- Q: Is she here now? Yes/No/Maybe
4. She went to see John a moment ago.
- Q: Is she here now? Yes/No/Maybe
5. Who has opened the window?
- Q: Is the window still open now? Yes/No/Maybe
6. Who opened the window just now?
- Q: Is the window still open now? Yes/No/Maybe

B. Now compare your answers in groups and give reasons for your choices.

-----

This task focuses on the difference between one meaning/usage of the present perfect tense and that of the past simple tense. When students have finished the task, the teacher can elicit the 'rule(s)' of the difference(s) between the two tenses, exemplified in the sentences. The task is so designed that the 'rules' are to be discovered by the students rather than to be told by the teacher.

-----

Task F: 1

(a) Read the following passage (adapted from Scottish Daily Express, Aug. 18, 1989), and (b) in pairs discuss where you think it can be improved by using the passive or the active form (make some other changes if necessary). (c) Then give your reasons for the change(s) you make.

Railway bosses blamed vandals last night for a rail tragedy which cost a three-year-old boy his life. Little Gordon Young died in hospital yesterday less than 24 hours after a train struck him. He had wandered on to a line where some people have wrecked special fencing 10 times in the last six weeks. As

his grief-stricken parents Gordon and Elizabeth were comforted by friends, Scotrail urged other families to keep their children off railway lines.

Change(s) to be made:

Reasons:

-----

When doing this task, students are invited to think about the choices and give reasons for the choices. The task is intended to reflect what Rea-Dickins and Woods (1988:637) call 'the construct of communicative competence'. The decision-making activity in the task not only provides learners with a linguistic context where linguistic forms and communicative intention are integrated but also involves the issues of choice (between active and passive forms) and appropriacy of use in the given context.

-----

Task G:

- A. The following passage (from Alexander 1967, Book 2, p.13) is made up of simple sentences. Combine some (or all) of them by using appropriate conjunctions and connective adverbs.

Last week I went to the theatre. I had a very good seat. The play was very interesting. I did not enjoy it. A young man and a young woman were sitting behind me. They were talking loudly. I got very angry. I could not hear the actors. I turned round. I looked at the man and the woman angrily. They did not pay any attention.

- B. Now work in pairs. Compare your version with your partner's and give reasons for your combination and choice of conjunctions and adverbs.
-

When doing this task, students must understand the inter-sentential relationships (Huang 1988:19-24) in the passage. Students have freedom in choosing appropriate conjunctions/adverbs. As different students may make different choices and numbers of changes, this task can be said to be heterogeneously-oriented.

#### 8.5 The Use-based Task

Use-based tasks are those which provide students with opportunities to use the target language in communication. The language that learners will use is in no way predetermined. In other words, they can use whatever language they want to use in order to get meanings across, although some forms are more likely to be used than others. This type of task aims at replicating features of communication in real-world situations. The following letter from CECL 1 (Li et al 1987a:94) can be used as input to elicit students' use of the simple present tense in communication as the letter-writing will inevitably involve the use of the tense.

---

Task H:

Read the following letter and write a reply.

5 Acacia Avenue  
Inkford  
Cheshire  
United Kingdom  
6 November, 1991

Dear Fellow Student,

I am in the Foreign Language Department at Inkford Teacher Training College and I am at present working on a project about student life in different countries. I am writing to students at various countries all over the world to ask them for information about their daily life. I would like to know, for example:

How many classes do you have each day?

How much time do you spend studying by yourself?

How often do you play sport? What kind of sport do you play?

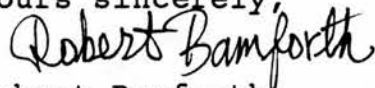
What do you do in the evenings?

What do you do at the weekends?

I am looking forward to hearing from you, and will be very grateful for any help you can give me.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Bamforth

---

This task is likely to be interesting and motivating because students may feel that they are using the language to communicate rather than only practising the language form. The focus of the task is on using language to communicate.

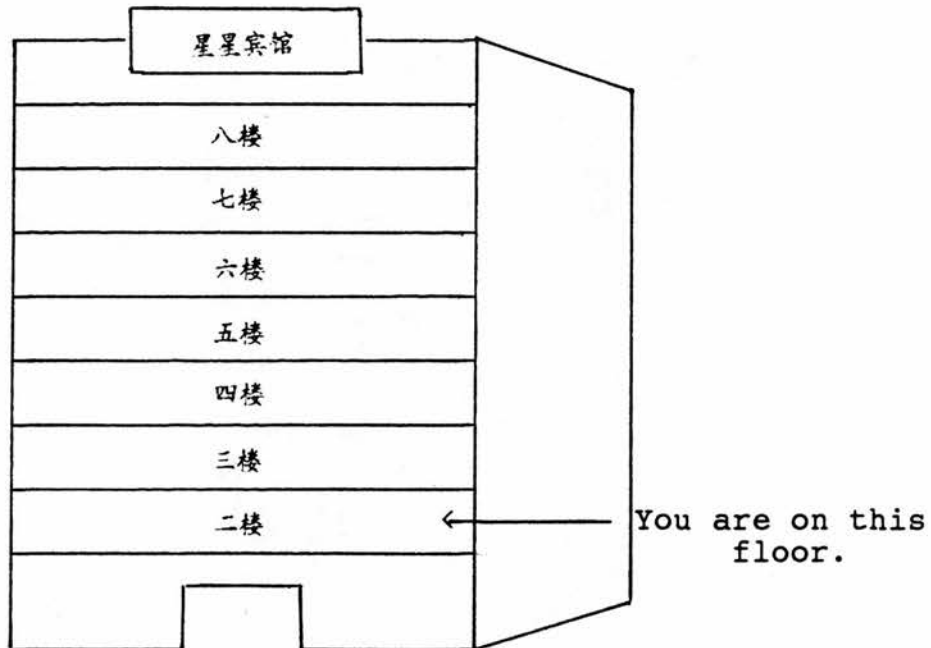
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Task I: 2

Work in pairs (one as A and the other as B) to find out what happened between two students.

For student A:

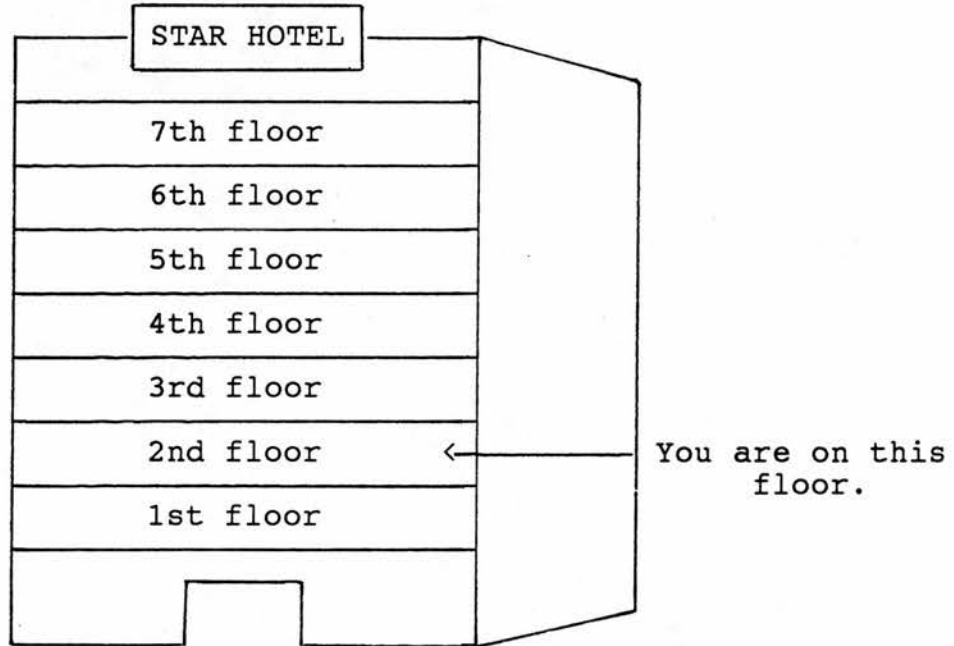
You are a Chinese student. You arranged to meet an English friend on the 2nd floor of a hotel at 2 p.m. yesterday. You arrived at 2.10 p.m. (10 minutes late because of a road accident). You could not find your friend on the 2nd floor. You waited just outside the entrance to the 2nd floor till 2:30. Then you went home.



.....

For Student B:

You are a student from Britain. You arrived in China two days ago. You arranged to meet a Chinese friend on the 2nd floor of a hotel at 2 p.m. yesterday. You arrived at 2 p.m. exactly. You could not find your friend. You waited just outside the lift of the 2nd floor until 2:20 p.m.. Then you left.



-----

Although the language forms that the students use in carrying out this task are not pre-determined, it is likely that carrying out this task may involve the use of wh-questions such as:

When/What time/At what time did you arrive...?

When did you leave the floor...?

Which hotel did you go to...?

Where were you at 2 o'clock...?

Why didn't you ...?

On which floor were you waiting for me...?

How long did you wait for me...?

How did you go to the second floor (taking the lift  
or walking upstairs)...?

etc.

Of course, performing this task may also involve the use of the simple past tense. As the British ground floor is the Chinese first floor and this often causes misunderstandings between the Chinese and British, this task is intended to remind students of this potential confusion, once the problem is solved. The task is a kind of problem-solving task as it requires students to use language to solve problems.

## 8.6 Analyses of Sample Tasks

In Section 2.6.3 the six different components of a task were described and analysed. Since some examples of task were looked at, an analysis of the tasks in terms of the task components on the one hand and the underlying design principles of CEGCCL on the other hand is necessary. In the remainder of this section, three tasks which were presented above will be analysed as examples.

### 8.6.1 Analysis of Task Components

(1) Analysis of Task B: This is a pre-task. Its goal is (1) to arouse students' interest (as the cartoon is humorous) and (2) to draw their attention to the habitual use of the simple present tense (because the three utterances use this tense to express habitual



meaning). The input is an authentic cartoon from a newspaper. The classroom activity is discussion (working out reason(s)). The teacher's role may be facilitator, helper, and/or guide. The learner's role is negotiator and/or interactor. The setting is pair-work.

(2) Analysis of Task D: This is a form-focused task. Its goal is to ask students to practise the simple present tense. The input is some Wh-questions about students' personal experience/information. The activity is questions-and-answers. The teacher's role is mainly observer. The learners' roles are questioners/answerers. The setting is pair-work.

(3) Analysis of Task F: This is a meaning-focused task. Its implicit goal may be to develop students' awareness of the linguistic choices in communication while its explicit goal is to require students to make choices between the active and the passive according to the given context. The input is a semi-authentic piece of news from a local newspaper (adapted mainly because of its linguistic difficulty). The activity is discussion (decision-making). The teacher's role may be facilitator, helper, and/or guide (or participant). The learner's role is negotiator and interactor. The setting is individual work and pair-work.

(4) Analysis of Task H: This is a use-based task. Its explicit goal is to ask students to tell others about their daily life at the university. Its implicit goal is to give students an 'authentic' opportunity to use the

simple present tense. The input is an inauthentic letter, though it may look like an authentic one. The activity is writing a reply according to individual experience and preferences. If this is a task done in class, the teacher's role may be planner, observer, or manager. If it is done outside class, there is no explicit teacher role. The learner's role is writer. The setting is individual work. If this task is compared with Task D above, it can be seen that both tasks are designed to ask students to practise the simple present tense. However, although the setting in Task D is pair-work, the task is form-focused, choice-limited (because there are specific questions), and as there is no communicational intention/goal, the task is not meaningful. By contrast, although the setting in Task H is individual work, the task is meaning-focused, comparatively choice-free (because the questions are only examples), and meaningful because there is an intended communicational goal. From Task H it can be seen that pair-work of itself is no more communicative than individual work, a point made earlier (e.g., Section 6.6.1.2).

#### 8.6.2 Analysis of the Design Principles

Examples of the types of task that CEGCCL will consist of were examined and analysed in terms of the task components in the above section. These tasks were designed according to the three design principles (i.e.,

task-based, learning-centred, grammar-specific, see Section 7.5) underlying CEGCCL. Different tasks have different goals, types of input, activity types, teacher roles and learner roles, and classroom arrangements (i.e., individual work, pair-work, group work, or whole-class work). In this section Tasks B, D, F, and H will be looked at from the angle of the three principles.

(1) Analysis of Task B: This task, to a large extent, satisfies the three principles, although it is not very grammar-specific. It is task-based because it was presented to be so (as indicated above); it is learning-centred because students' attention is directed to meaning (e.g., why the boy asks the questions rather than what forms the boy uses to ask the questions); and it is grammar-specific because the verbal input contains the habitual use of the simple present tense.

(2) Analysis of Task D: Although this task is more or less the same as a traditional exercise, it is treated as a task here because it is viewed as consisting of the six components of a task (see Section 8.6.1 above). This task is clearly grammar-specific because to answer the questions one must use the simple present tense (as students are required to use complete sentences). It is, to a large extent, learning-centred because it involves practising using the language and because the activity is done between students rather than between the teacher and the students. However, it is not task-based if 'task-based' is used to suggest the implication of 'communica-

tively task-based' (see Sections 2.6.1 and 7.5.2). Because this is a form-focused task, 'grammar-specific' is emphasised at the expense of 'task-based'.

(3) Analysis of Task F: Basically, this task also meets the requirements of the three principles. It is task-based, as indicated above; it is learning-centred because it involves students' engagement in the activity not directly focused on language itself but on the communicative use of the language; it is clearly grammar-specific because the task requires students to discuss the appropriate and inappropriate use of the active/passive form.

(4) Analysis of Task H: Like the other two tasks (B & F), this task reflects the three underlying principles: it is task-based because each student writes a reply according to his personal experience and preference; it is learning-centred because students' attention is directed to a meaning-focused, meaningful activity. This task has many of the communicative features discussed in Section 2.5.2. It is grammar-specific because writing the reply inevitably requires the use of the simple present tense.

### 8.6.3 Concluding Remarks

It is clear that the four types of task suggested at the beginning of this Chapter can be used to practise the same grammatical form. The question to be asked is why it is necessary to have the form-focused task. In other

words, why cannot the form-focused task be replaced by other types of task since the latter are more communication-oriented than the former? For example, since both Task D (form-focused) and Task H (use-based) are designed to practise the simple present tense, what is the point of keeping the former in a communication-oriented course? Generally speaking, different types of task serve different purposes and reflect certain assumptions about language learning. The justification for the form-focused task is that the focus of the task is more clear, explicit and straightforward than the other types of task and that it is less time-consuming, which reflects the underlying assumption that both conscious/explicit learning and unconscious/implicit learning are necessary (see Section 4.2).

## 8.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter began with some sample tasks, ranged from communicative to non-communicative. Four different task types were proposed and discussed. Some tasks were analysed in terms of both task components and the three underlying design principles. From the analysis of tasks, it can be discerned that the employment of authenticity of input and classroom settings such as pair-work does not mean that the task is more communicative than those which lack it. It was also argued that different types of task have different pedagogic purposes.

## CHAPTER 9: THE CEGCCL METHODOLOGY

### 9.1 Introduction

As indicated earlier (see Section 2.7.1), methodology in the present study is used to include Richards and Rodgers' (1986:14-29) 'design' and 'procedure' elements but to exclude the sub-element of 'syllabus' as it is believed that syllabus and methodology can be separated (see Sections 3.2.2, 3.5).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate some methodological issues of CEGCCL. Since the general aims and specific objectives, the task types and the activity types, and the role of the instructional materials have been discussed in earlier chapters, this chapter will only deal with the realisation of the three general principles laid down in Section 7.5 in the materials writing and classroom instruction. It will begin with an analysis of the instructional materials, and then examine the teaching procedures and other methodological issues for classroom instruction.

### 9.2 The Writing of CEGCCL Materials

A complete course design is beyond the scope of the present study. However, in order to demonstrate what CEGCCL materials should be like, sample materials for the Students' Book, the Reference Book, and the Teacher's Book have been written (see Appendix 7), reflecting the aims and objectives, theoretical underpinnings about the

nature of language and language learning, the design principles, the methodology, and classroom techniques, among other things. This section will deal with the sample unit of CEGCCL from the perspective of materials writing.

#### 9.2.1 Introductory Remarks

The proposed grammar course (i.e., CEGCCL) involves the writing and use of three books: (1) the Students' Book, (2) the Reference Book, and (3) the Teacher's Handbook. The Students Book will be for classroom use and it will be designed to be worked through, section by section, unit by unit. The Reference Book will be for use outside the class, and its main purpose will be to complement the Students' Book. Both the Students' Book and the Reference Book will be for students as well as for the teacher. The Teacher's Handbook will be for the teacher only and will be written for four main purposes: (a) to describe the goals and aims of the tasks and the teaching activities; (b) to provide some suggested procedures for conducting the lesson; (c) to offer suggested answers to the exercises/activities in the task; and (d) to remind the teacher of some methodological issues.

#### 9.2.2 The Students' Book

The Students' Book (the provisional syllabus of which is provided in Appendix 6) will be made up of 36



units; each of the 36 units will be designed to last about 2 class hours.<sup>1</sup> However, as the teaching pace varies from class to class owing to factors such as the level of the learners, the size of the class, the students' learning styles and the language proficiency of the teacher, it is up to the classroom teacher to decide whether to leave out certain parts of a unit (or even a whole unit) or to provide supplementary materials for classroom use.

The Students' Book will consist of two strands: the description/explanation and the task (see Part 2, Appendix 7). The description will be not only knowledge-based but also communication-oriented. This is, it will offer students necessary grammatical facts for communication and at the same time will help them to get ready to use the forms to communicate. For example, instead of only giving the linguistic facts such as the degrees of comparison and the constructions with comparison (as Thomson and Martinet 1980, Close 1975, and Alexander 1988a did), the students' attention is likely to be attracted to the need for communication if the description is written as follows:

When we want to make comparisons between two persons, two things, or two situations, we can use the comparative form of the adjective. (see 1.1.1, <sup>2</sup> Students' Book, Appendix 7)

This way of description is clearly more user-friendly than that in the knowledge-oriented course books (e.g.,

Thomson and Martinet 1980, Zhang et al 1983; see Section 5.6.2.6). Similarly, although the following two descriptions are the same in meaning, they are very likely to bring different reactions, because the former is less user-friendly, less personal, and less communication-oriented. Compare:

- (1) The 'more ... than' (or '-er ... than') or 'less ... than' patterns can be used to express superiority or inferiority.
- (2) If you want to express superiority or inferiority, you can use the 'more ... than' (or '-er ... than') or 'less ... than' patterns.

The former presents knowledge as a fact whereas the latter presents knowledge as a necessary tool for communication.

Although most of the examples in the description are inauthentic, many of them are chosen according to certain underlying assumptions. For example, in 1.1.2 (Students' Book), the following two sentences are written for implicit contrast:

The girl is more interesting than the boy.

The boy is less interesting than the girl.

These two sentences has more or less the same structure and express the same meaning. However, from a use perspective, they are thematically (see Halliday 1970a, 1973, 1985) different, as the former starts with 'the girl' whereas the latter 'the boy'. It is hoped that

students will discover the difference by themselves. Therefore, in the task that follows (i.e., Task 2), students are asked first to 'transform' some utterances without changing the basic meanings and then to discuss the difference in use.

The description also reflects the writer's awareness of recent theoretical arguments. For example, most of the existing grammar books (e.g., Leech and Svartvik 1975:104; Sinclair et al 1990:85) only state that the comparison is made between things. Mitchell (1990a) criticises the statement (originating from Jespersen's (1924:245) tradition) that only persons and things can be compared with the comparative form by arguing that situations and propositions can also be compared; this point was incorporated in the description with examples which are involved with the comparison of situations (e.g., Riding a horse is not as easy as riding a bicycle.).

Having considered the description, I turn now to the task strand. About three quarters of the Students' Book will be devoted to tasks. This will reflect two of the general principles (i.e., task-based, learning-centred). Some tasks will be for practice purposes and others for transfer purposes. Some tasks will be designed to help students review what they have learned. For example, the first phase of Task 1 in the sample material requires students to decide who is being compared in the cartoons.

Others will be intended to provide students with opportunities to use the target language communicatively in the classroom.

One of the underlying objectives of CEGCCL is to highlight the grammatical structures used in the CECL core course. Therefore, some input will be taken from the CECL core course (e.g., the cartoons in Task 1, the two tables in Task 10, see Part 2, Appendix 7). This is intended not only to help students to 'review' what they have studied by using the highlighted structures but also to show the integration of the CECL core course and the CEGCCL sub-course.

As one of the requirements of the grammar course (see CNESSTE 1989) is that it should present 'grammatical concepts' clearly (see Section 5.3.4), some tasks are designed to facilitate the development of their grammatical conception. For example:

Comparatives can be used as complements after a link verb or as modifiers in front of a noun. Can you give some examples? ... If you can't, look at the cartoons in Task 1 again to find examples. (in Task 3, Students' Book, see Appendix 7)

Although this task aims at grammatical structures, it does not present the concept as knowledge; on the contrary, it requires students to discover the grammatical facts rather than to be told about the facts, which is intended to reflect the three general principles of CEGCCL.

As cartoon characters can be used to make grammar work more lively (Land 1983:56), cartoons will be used as input in the tasks where appropriate. They will be selected from different sources (e.g., books and newspapers -- English as well as Chinese). Although the use of authentic visual materials in the classroom is not a new idea in the Western World, it is really something that Chinese learners are not familiar with because such materials are not usually available. As is shown in the sample materials, most of the cartoons are used not only to arouse students' interest and curiosity but also to be explored with regard to grammar in use. Besides, the use of some of the cartoons is not merely for exemplifying grammatical facts, but as input which will lead to learners' creative production. For example, with the cartoons in Task 16 from a Chinese newspaper, students will not only be required to 'translate' the titles but also to express their understanding and opinions of the pictures.

The design of the tasks will be in accordance with the three general principles; it will also reveal the underlying classroom teaching methodology and techniques/strategies. For example, as can be seen from the sample materials (the Students' Book), about two thirds (maybe more) of the class time will be taken up by students' practice and use of the target language, which clearly contrasts with the present teacher-fronted and lecture-based Chinese way of grammar teaching discussed in

Section 5.6. There will be different types of classroom activities and classroom groupings (i.e., the settings of the task) in the Students' Book. The materials will be so designed that learners are the centre of the classroom activity and learning process and that the teacher's role is often as guide, facilitator, or helper, although the inherent 'teacher' role is usually there as well. The four types of task discussed in Chapter 8 will find their proper places in the Students' Book, as was shown in the sample materials (see Part 2, Appendix 7).

The ideas that the materials will be designed to be user-friendly and that about three quarters of the Students' Book and about two thirds of the class time will be devoted to the tasks reflect the underlying principles and methodology of CEGCCL.

It is worth pointing out that the proportion of space devoted to each grammar item in both the description and the task will depend on factors such as the complexity of the item, and students' familiarity with it, among other things. In the sample unit (see Part 2, Appendix 7), more space was given to the comparison of the adjective than to the comparison of the adverb because the mastery of the former means that learning the latter is not a difficult job. Within the comparison of the adjective, more space was devoted to the comparative than to the superlative because the former is more frequently used and more complex than the latter.

### 9.2.3 The Reference Book

As the class time for the grammar course is rather limited and as the focus of classroom teaching is on students' practice and use of the forms, classroom teaching alone cannot help learners to reach the requirements set down in CNESSTE (1989). Therefore, it is necessary for learners to consult a reference book outside class when they feel the need. The Reference Book will be designed to complement the Students' Book. In the rest of this section the sample unit of the Reference Book (see Part 4, Appendix 7) will be examined.

Although the Students' Book is made up of 36 units, this does not mean that the Reference Book will consist of 36 corresponding chapters, because the former is selected and graded for classroom teaching whereas the latter is not. Readers are not expected to read it through, section by section, or chapter by chapter. They are expected to use it only when they need more information and/or when they are not sure of certain grammatical facts. For example, if a reader already knows how to form the comparative of adjectives, he does not need to consult the book, although the information will be there.

The coverage in the Reference Book will be wider than that in the Students' Book. For example, in the sample chapter it includes information on (a) the grammatical facts (e.g., 1.1.2: Formation of degree of comparison; 1.2.3: Three basic structures), (b) the



grammatical concepts (e.g., 1.1.7: Than -- preposition or conjunction; 1.2.6: The comparative clause), and (c) the relationships between form, meaning, and use (e.g., 1.1.6: Form and meaning; 1.2.5: Comparison of adjectives and adverbs).

As it is suggested by Greenbaum (1987) that a reference book should have usage notes and an index and cross-references, the Reference Book will take these points into consideration. For example, in 1.1.3.1 (Superiority) of the sample materials, it is pointed out that the choice of 'of-phrase' and 'in-phrase' will affect the noun phrases in number which follow the 'of-phrase' and 'in-phrase' (i.e., the 'of-phrase' is usually followed by a plural noun phrase while the 'in-phrase' by a singular one). The style (formal, neutral, informal, etc.) of the form will also be considered in the description. For example, in 1.1.7 (Than -- preposition or conjunction?) it was noted that 'than I (am)' is used in formal style whereas 'than me' in informal situations. Cross-reference will be made where it is likely to be needed (see Part 4, Appendix 7). An index will be supplied and the headings will be of three kinds: (a) grammatical terms (e.g., adjective), (b) notions (e.g., time, duration) and functions (e.g., comparing things, giving information), and (c) individual words and phrases such as 'than' and 'a lot' which are 'grammar-related'.

#### 9.2.4 The Teacher's Handbook

As indicated in Chapter 5, the teacher's handbook plays a very important role in the implementation of any language course in the Chinese ELT context. Since the English level of most of the Chinese teachers of English is far from being proficient and as the preparation stage before the actual classroom teaching is a vital one, a course is unlikely to be successful if there is no accompanying teacher's book. For a course such as CEGCCL, which departs from the traditional approach, a teacher's handbook is that much more necessary. As my survey shows (Section 6.6.1.4), some teachers complain about the inadequacy of the CECL teacher's handbooks by saying that they have to spend a great deal of time in preparing every lesson. It may be true that some teachers do not have the courage to use the CECL core course because the accompanying teacher's handbooks are far from being comprehensive from a Chinese teacher's point of view.

The functions of the Teacher's Book in CEGCCL, as pointed out earlier (Section 9.2.1 above), are (a) to describe the goals, and aims of the tasks and classroom activities, (b) to provide some suggested procedures for conducting the lesson, (c) to give suggested answers/solutions to the tasks/activities/problems, and (d) to remind the teacher of some methodological issues. From a teacher's point of view, of these three elements, the third one may be the most important, because suggested

answers help the teacher to build his confidence since the teacher-as-a-model and textbook-as-a-model practices are still popular in the present Chinese ELT context (Section 5.4). From the materials writer's perspective, although the other three elements in the Handbook are useful, they may not be essential because what is proposed is a dynamic, participant-oriented teaching methodology, which means that the teacher is expected to adopt and/or adapt any teaching techniques/strategies according to the particular teaching context. Therefore, many of the decisions (e.g., the deletion or addition of the classroom teaching materials, the roles of the teacher and learners) are to be made by the classroom teacher; he is the person who knows the students (their needs, interest, language proficiency, learning styles, among other things) best. Considering the fact that some teachers may not be confident and competent to deal with the proposed course, useful guidelines for classroom implementation of the course will be provided in the Teacher's Handbook (see Part 1, Appendix 7).

The format of the Teacher's Handbook will be as follows: (1) Introduction to the unit and the structure(s) being highlighted, and (2) Tasks: their goals, focus, suggested procedures, suggested answers, and other information (e.g., if the input is from the CECL core course, it would be stated clearly so that the teacher can look at the relevant part or unit in the CECL core course in order to conduct the lesson better).

In order to see the relationship between the Students' Book and the Teacher's Handbook, let us look at one example. The following are (a) a task (Task 2) from the 'Students' Book' and (b) the corresponding teacher's notes from the 'Teacher's Handbook'.

**Task 2** (from Students' Book, see Appendix 7)

(1) Work in pairs. In the first three pictures of the cartoons the girl begins her utterances by saying 'My dad...'. Can you change the girl's utterance by saying 'Your dad...' without changing the basic meanings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Work in pairs. Discuss the difference in use between 'The boy is more interesting than the girl' and 'The girl is less interesting than the boy'. Decide when you would use the former/latter and give reason(s).

**Task 2** (from Teacher's Handbook, see Appendix 7)

The first phase of this task is designed to focus on meaning rather than form. The kind of 'transformation' involved in this task is

exemplified in the preceding description (i.e., 1.1.2: The girl is more interesting than the boy. --> The boy is less interesting than the girl). If you think students may have problems, give them an example (or examples) and/or remind them of the transformation before they begin production (writing). The sentences students are expected to write are: 1. Your dad is shorter than my dad; Your dad is not so tall as my dad; Your dad is less tall than my dad. 2. Your dad has narrower shoulders than my dad. 3. Your dad is not so good-looking as my dad; Your dad is less good-looking than my dad. These are suggested answers only, as other sentences are also acceptable; and the spaces provided are suggested, too. If students produce sentences such as 'Your dad is not as handsome as my dad' and 'Your dad's shoulders are not so broad as my dad's, do not correct them because they are grammatical too.

In the second phase of the task, if the students do not know the difference in use between 'My dad is taller than your dad' and 'Your dad is shorter than my dad', you may help them to discover the difference or simply tell them about it. The difference is discussed in the Reference Book (1.1.5: Form and meaning).

As stated in the 'Handbook', the focus of this task is on meaning. The teacher is expected to conduct the task

according to the particular teaching context. He is also reminded of the possibility of students' various other 'transformations' and is advised not to regard them as incorrect even though they are not the same as the suggested sentences.

#### 9.2.5 Concluding Remarks

The writing of the course book is only part of the battle; whether the course will be successful mainly depends on the learners and the teacher, among other factors. Students may not like the course materials or they may prefer the traditional approach after being taught in a communicative way. Therefore, the piloting of the course materials is a very important stage before they are used on a large scale.

Like other communication-oriented courses, CEGCCL's demand on the teacher is greater than that of structure-based ones. The comprehensiveness of the Teacher's Handbook itself does not guarantee the success of the implementation of the course in the classroom, since the availability of the teacher's notes is secondary to the training of the teacher. As a course designer, what I can do now is to provide some guidelines for the classroom teacher (see Part 1, Appendix 7), which will help him to understand the basic assumptions, and underlying principles, classroom strategies and techniques, among other things.

### 9.3 Classroom Teaching

Having discussed the writing of instructional materials in terms of the CEGCCL methodology, I turn now to the implementation aspect of the methodology in classroom teaching.

#### 9.3.1 The Stages of Teaching an Item -- a general framework

It was noted in Section 4.5 that there were different ways and strategies for the teaching of grammar. Both Ur (1988:7) and Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988:27-8) suggest similar stages in presenting grammar items, while Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983:122-3) proposal is more communication-oriented. As was argued in Section 4.5, the teaching of grammar should be both form-focused and meaning-focused (cf. Andrews 1983:133, Johnson 1983:152) and form should often go before meaning (cf. Brumfit 1979a:183, Johnson 1979, 1982:192-200; also see discussion of Chinese teachers' and learners' attitudes to different types of exercise, Section 6.6.2.3).

I would suggest four stages (i.e., warm-up, focus, practice, and follow-up) for the teaching and learning of a grammar item, each stage consisting of four elements (purpose, input, procedure, task category).



### 9.3.1.1 Stage 1: Warm-up

#### (1) Purpose

There are two main purposes for this stage: (a) to make the learning of a certain grammar point meaningful and communicatively relevant and to stimulate students' curiosity and arouse their learning interest; (b) to give the classroom teacher some idea of what the students are already able to do/say about a certain subject by using certain grammatical forms so that the teacher can 'adapt' the teaching plan/content/materials in order to focus the lesson on less familiar items.

#### (2) Input

The input at this stage is activities, which involve the use of pictures, cartoons, diagrams, and/or questions. The input may be related to what the students have learned in the previous lesson(s) (or in the CECL core course) or what they are going to learn in the lesson.

#### (3) Procedure

Students are asked to do the activity either individually or in pairs/groups (or even with the whole class as one). If the activity is not whole-class work, the teacher may first observe the class activity and later bring the class together; students then report their findings, problems, or opinions. Then the teacher

moves to the main points of the lesson.

#### (4) Task category

As pre-tasks are designed for warm-up purposes, tasks involved at this stage are mainly pre-tasks.

### 9.3.1.2 Stage 2: Focus

#### (1) Purpose

The purposes of this stage are: (a) to focus on the structure(s) that is/are to be highlighted; (b) to provide enough examples of the highlighted structure(s); (c) to clarify any problems concerning the structure(s).

#### (2) Input

The input may be groups of sentences, or a self-contained text which exemplifies the structure(s) to be focused. If the input is a group of sentences, the purpose may be rule-discovering/-exemplifying or comparing; if the input is a text, the focus may be on how certain structures are used in discourse/communication.

#### (3) Procedure

The teacher may want to present the structure(s) to the learners or clarify some points. Or he may want to ask students to carry out tasks which may be overtly or covertly structure-oriented -- e.g., to work out rules,

to recognise the differences between certain structures, to answer questions related to the text, to solve problems. Different tasks may require different procedures and classroom groupings. The teacher's role changes according to the nature and the stage of the task/activity.

#### (4) Task category

Tasks involved at this stage are normally form-focused and meaning-focused tasks.

### 9.3.1.3 Stage 3: Practice

#### (1) Purpose

The purposes are: (a) to give students opportunities to use (i.e., to practise using and/or to communicate by using) the structures to which they have been exposed and/or which they have learned in both controlled and free practice; (b) to see how well the students can use the new structure(s) in their production (which will help the teacher to adapt his teaching plan at Stage 4.).

#### (2) Input

The input at this stage is mainly tasks and activities, which involve the use of pictures, cartoons, diagrams, texts, and/or questions. Some tasks/activities will lead to controlled practice, others to free practice. Students are required to perform the tasks

according to the facts given, or by using their own knowledge, skills, and personal experiences.

### (3) Procedure

Students use English to convey/demand information (e.g., to exchange ideas, to ask for/give information, to express personal preferences, etc.). They may work individually, in pairs, in groups, or even as one big group. The teacher is there to guide/facilitate the activities. Different tasks and activities require different procedures.

### (4) Task category

Tasks involved at this stage are form-focused, meaning-focused and use-based tasks.

#### 9.3.1.4 Stage 4: Follow-up

Generally speaking, this is the final stage and is often teacher-controlled. The teacher may want to ask for clarification or for details from individuals/pairs/groups; he may ask students what answers they gave or what conclusions they came to; he may summarise the main points dealt with during the lesson and highlight them; he may give explanations of certain language points; he may advise students to consult reference books and/or dictionaries; or he may assign some tasks as homework to the students. Although this is the last stage, it does not mean that it only happens at the end of the lesson.

In fact this stage can happen at any point once the teaching/learning begins.

#### 9.3.1.5 Concluding remarks

The four stages suggested above are similar or closely related to the task types discussed in Chapter 8. However, they are not identical. For example, there is no similar task type to match the 'follow-up' stage. Besides, although the four stages are suggested as if they were in strict sequence, in fact they are not. As will be shown in the following section, the stages in actual teaching vary according to different teaching situations.

#### 9.3.2 The Course Material and the Teaching Stages -- an analysis

Having proposed a general framework, I turn now to the analysis of the course materials and the implied stages in the classroom teaching. In the sample unit in the Students' Book (see Appendix 7), two grammar items (i.e., the comparison of the adjective and the comparison of the adverb) were dealt with. In the remainder of this section the organisation of the instructional materials (in the Students' Book) in terms of the underlying teaching procedure will be analysed.

(1) Comparatives of the adjective

Description 1.1.1 and Task 1 belong to stage 1 discussed in the preceding section.

Descriptions 1.1.2, 1.1.3, and 1.1.4 and Tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5 belong to stage 2.

Tasks 6, 7 and 8 belong to Stage 3.

(2) Superlatives of the adjective

Description 1.2.1 and Task 9 belong to Stage 1.

Description 1.2.2 belongs to Stage 2.

Task 10 belongs to Stage 3.

(3) Comparisons of the adverb

Descriptions 2.1, and 2.2 and Tasks 11, 12 and 13 belong to Stage 1.

Descriptions 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 and Task 14 belong to Stage 2.

Task 15 belongs to Stage 3.

Description 2.6 belongs to Stage 2.

Task 16 belongs to Stage 3.

The above analysis shows that the design of the instructional materials and the teaching stages suggested in Section 9.3.1 above match quite well. However, it does not mean that the procedure implied in the material is the procedure for classroom teaching. For example, one description (i.e., 2.6) belonging to the focus stage (see (3) Comparisons of the adverb above) does not precede but follows part of the practice stage (i.e.,

Task 15).

Another point derived from the above analysis is that in the warm-up and focus stages, there are both descriptions and tasks whereas in the practice stage there are only tasks.

Still another point is that usually the follow-up stage is not incorporated in the instructional materials. As was pointed out in the preceding section, this stage can take place at any point of the lesson so long as the teacher sees it as appropriate. This is a reflection of the assumption that the CEGCCL methodology is dynamic in that the classroom teacher is expected to manage the class and to adapt the teaching materials to the actual teaching situation.

### 9.3.3 Some Methodological Issues

As White (1983:10) points out, 'the major dilemma which communicative methodology has given rise to is the issue of control versus freedom'. The more control the teacher imposes on the learner, the less freedom the learner has. In the present case, the more control imposed on the teaching procedure, the less freedom the classroom teacher will have in the teaching process. Therefore, what seems more sensible is not to tell the teacher what to do, but to help him realise the nature of the teaching methodology. It is for this reason that some methodological guidelines (see Part 1, Appendix 7) have been specially written for the prospective CEGCCL



teacher. As the methodological distinctions between real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks on the one hand and between transfer and practice activities on the other were made in early discussions, the remainder of this section will focus on some other methodological issues.

#### 9.3.3.1 Mistake correction

One of the characteristics of the traditional approach is to prevent learners from making mistakes, whereas in CLT mistakes/errors are seen as a natural and healthy phenomenon. It seems that neither view of mistakes/errors can be adopted without caution. My view is that if the mistake/error hampers information exchange and the communication process it must be corrected. Also, if the mistake/error is concerned with the structure being practised/highlighted in the lesson, it should also be corrected in one way or another (because there are many ways to correct learners' mistakes/errors). However, it is the teacher who will decide what to do with the mistake/error since he knows the teaching context best. It is also up to him to decide when and how to correct learners' mistakes/errors if he thinks it necessary to correct them. Also, if the teacher thinks that it is appropriate for learners to correct each other's mistakes/errors, he can encourage them to do so.

#### 9.3.3.2 Inductive versus deductive

Although both inductive and deductive learning are

incorporated in the design of the course materials, again, it is the teacher who is expected to choose one of them or other ways (e.g., guided-discovery) according to the particular teaching context. For example, in the first phase of Task 1 in the Students' Book (see Part 2, Appendix 7) it is inductive learning that is intended. However, the teacher may adopt the deductive way simply by telling students that the girl is comparing her father with the boy's father. Or the teacher may guide the students to discover the 'rule' by asking them with whom or with whose father the girl is comparing her father.

#### 9.3.3.3 Accuracy versus fluency

As indicated earlier (see Chapters 2 and 8), there are different kinds/types of task in CEGCCL. Some of the tasks are designed to promote accuracy, others fluency (see Chapter 8 and Appendix 7). However, the teacher can change the focus of the task. For example, Task 8 in the sample materials (Students' Book, Appendix 7) is designed for fluency purposes: students are quite free to say what they want to say. The teacher may make the task accuracy-oriented by asking students only to use certain structures.

#### 9.3.3.4 Classroom groupings and the mode of production

As can be seen from the sample materials (Students' Book), some tasks are designed to be carried out in pairs or groups, others individually. The teacher can change

or rearrange the classroom groupings according to the particular teaching context. For example, Task 2 is designed to be completed by students working in pairs as it may be difficult if students work individually. However, if the teacher thinks that individual work or group work is more appropriate to the particular class, he can change the suggested grouping.

Similarly, some tasks are designed to be done orally, others in writing. If the other mode is more suitable than the suggested one, again, the teacher is encouraged to change the original mode. For example, Task 8 is designed to be done as oral work and in pairs. The teacher may assign it to the students as written work to be done individually (e.g., ... write ten sentences about them ...) in class or as homework (in which case a 'follow-up' stage is necessary where feedback can be given).

#### 9.3.3.5 The use of the mother tongue

One of the teaching principles laid down in CNESSTE (1989:13) is the relationship between the mother tongue and the target language. Although both students and the teacher are expected/encouraged to use English in the classroom, it does not mean that Chinese should be rejected at all times (cf. Johnson et al 1983). For example, if a concept can be understood better when the explanation is in Chinese, then the teacher is advised to use Chinese. Similarly, when certain translation

exercises are regarded as necessary, the teacher can ask students to do the exercise.

#### 9.3.3.6 Summary and conclusion

The methodological suggestions discussed so far are not the only issues involved in the classroom implementation of CEGCCL. There are other problems, which will come up when the pilot study begins, which the teacher will face once the teaching starts. Therefore, it is essential to pilot the course materials so that other issues may be discovered and dealt with before the materials are used on a large scale. The design of a communication-oriented course brings the training of teachers into prominence.

#### 9.3.4 Roles of the Teacher and Students

In the 'design' component of CEGCCL there is an element concerning the roles of learners and the teacher. In Section 7.4.2.4, the general roles of the teacher and the learners were discussed. The 'roles' of teachers and learners as task components were discussed in Section 2.6.3.4. As indicated in Section 9.2 above, the learners' roles and the teacher's roles in the classroom teaching are implied in the instructional materials (i.e., the Students' Book). For example, in the warm-up stage, the roles of the students may be interactors, negotiators, or listeners and receivers. By contrast, the teacher's roles may be facilitator, organiser, guide,

participant, 'sender', or 'model'. The roles of the teacher and students change all the time and vary according to different kinds/types of task and different stages of a task and/or a lesson as well as according to different groups of learners. In Section 9.3.3 above, it was suggested that classroom teaching methodology should be flexible. The dynamic nature of the teaching methodology entails the flexibility of the roles of the teacher and learners. As the proposed teaching methodology in CEGCCL is dynamic and participant-oriented, it would be against this principle if the roles of the teacher and learners implied in each task were seen as strict and unalterable.

#### 9.3.5 Towards a Dynamic Framework

As was argued in Section 5.9.1, the design of a language programme involves situation analysis. The successful implementation of CEGCCL largely depends on learner factors, teacher factors, and administrative factors (Section 5.9.1). Although these factors, whenever possible, have been taken into careful consideration (e.g., by getting information from questionnaires and classroom observations, see Chapters 5 and 6), it is beyond the course designer's ability to control other factors, at least at the present moment. Therefore, what can be suggested here is that the teacher should adopt a dynamic teaching methodology, which should be in accordance with the theoretical assumptions

underlying the course and which can best help learners to achieve their goals. Such a methodology will evolve as our knowledge and understanding of language and language learning increase.

#### 9.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed some of the issues concerned with the CEGCCL methodology (others were dealt with in Sections 7.4.2 and 7.4.3). It began with the development of the course materials which were intended to reflect the theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and language learning, the teaching principles laid down in CNESSTE (1989) (see Section 5.3), the three general principles (see Section 7.5), and the underlying teaching methodology of CEGCCL. Then it went on to investigate issues concerning the classroom teaching. It was then suggested that the CEGCCL teaching methodology should be dynamic and participant-oriented. It was also emphasised that the success of a language programme depends on many factors, some of which are beyond the control of the course designer and the materials writer.

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

### 10.1 Introduction

This final chapter will be devoted to two issues: (a) a brief summary of the thesis, and (b) suggestions for further research.

### 10.2 A Brief Summary of the Present Study

The present study has tried to answer the five research questions and to achieve the three objectives raised in Section 0.3.1. The first part of the thesis discussed CLT, aiming at addressing the first research question: What is CLT? The objective of this part was to identify one type of CLT which is likely to be more appropriate in the Chinese ELT context. By looking at issues concerning the aim of CLT (i.e., communicative competence), theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and learning underlying CLT, characteristics and features of the communicative teaching of English, communicative teaching methodology, the concept of task and task components, and syllabus design, the thesis presented a general framework of CLT and established the ground for the discussion which followed. In this part it was argued that the weak version of CLT (i.e., teaching for communication) is more likely to be successful in the Chinese ELT context. It was also pointed out that grammar, which has gained new meanings in CLT, is still an important component in language



teaching. Although there is a general tendency to adopt a process-oriented direction in ELT curriculum design, I expressed explicitly a preference for a product-oriented syllabus (i.e., a notional/functional syllabus) because it is believed that a product-oriented syllabus will be more acceptable given China's present textbook-oriented/-centred ELT situation. However, the thesis suggested a process-oriented classroom teaching methodology, which gives rise to the problem of teaching training.

The second part of the thesis examined the Chinese ELT context by answering two questions: (a) What is the ELT situation in China? (b) What are Chinese students' and teachers' reactions to CLT and its feasibility and appropriacy to ELT in general and grammar teaching in particular? The objective of this part was to report on research into the Chinese ELT situation, including my own survey on CLT and grammar teaching in particular. The results of the survey showed the desirability of an approach to CLT tailored to Chinese needs. The result of my own survey also suggests that the weak version of CLT is perceived as both desirable and practicable and that there is the strong potential for a positive response to what the proposed course attempts to do, although the question remains as to the feasibility and appropriacy of CLT in institutions in China other than that where the survey was conducted.

The last part of the thesis dealt with two questions: (a) What are the implications of the survey

discussed in the previous part? (b) What should a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners be like? The objective of this part was to suggest a design for a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners based on the implications of the survey results reported in the previous part.

The present study has given prominence to the issue of teacher training, as indicated earlier. This suggests that when a new teaching approach or method is being introduced the teacher factor (see Section 5.9.1) should be taken into serious consideration.

### 10.3 Areas to Be Further Explored

Although the thesis has tried to answer the five research questions and to achieve the three objectives stated at the beginning of the thesis (Section 0.3.1), this does not of course mean that the implementation of the proposed course will definitely be successful because there are other factors that will influence the success or otherwise of the course. In the following, two of these issues will be raised.

#### (1) The piloting of materials

The piloting of CEGCCL materials is a necessary step to future success. It is desirable that the materials be tested and revised before they are used on a large scale. It is also important that the materials writer(s) be involved in the classroom teaching during the piloting.

It would be a good idea if an experiment involving an experimental group and a control group were conducted at certain stages of the piloting.

## (2) The training of teachers

Strictly speaking, any teaching materials are only potentially communicative or otherwise, because the 'communicativeness' of the materials is often determined or influenced by its implementation in the classroom (cf. Andrews 1983:132). Besides, as Andrews (op. cit.:139) points out, 'the demands a communicative methodology makes on teachers are considerably greater than those of a more traditional methodology.' Therefore, the teacher has an essential role to play in the implementation of any communicative language course.

The need for the training of qualified Chinese ELT teachers cannot be over-emphasised. Early in 1986, Utley observed that crucial to the educational reform in China was the issue of teacher-training (Utley 1986:52). As indicated in Sections 5.9.5, one of the most pressing issues in the Chinese ELT context is the training of qualified teachers. I would suggest that if any training is to take place, the type of training that prospective CEGCCL teachers are to receive should be about (a) a communicative view of language, (b) a skill-development view of learning, (c) the relationship between syllabus and methodology and their reflection in materials written for Chinese learners, (d) aspects of classroom teaching

methodology, including classroom observation, materials trial and development, and evaluation of instructional materials and classroom teaching. Although the issue of teacher training is beyond the scope of the present study, as a course designer I have tried to help the prospective CEGCCL teacher by considering the coverage of the Teacher's Handbook carefully and by providing a set of guidelines and background notes (see Part 1, Appendix 7) to assist the teacher.

#### 10.4 Concluding Remarks

The thesis has covered the ground of the 'approach' and part of the 'design' components; the 'procedure' and 'evaluation' components as well as part of the 'design' component still need to be explored. What I have done is to lay the foundations and provide the basis for the design of a communicative English grammar course for Chinese learners. However, since the course is still at the design stage, its eventual success, as with all courses, will depend on the adjustments made as a result of feedback from teachers and students involved in the piloting of the materials, whose reactions to and comments on the course, especially the instructional materials and underlying classroom methodologies, will help in making adjustments and improvements.

## NOTES

## Notes to Introduction

1. 'The traditional approach' is used here as an umbrella term to cover approaches and methods such as 'the grammar-translation method', 'the audiolingual method', or 'the situational approach' which are commonly believed to be non-communicative, although one might argue that methods such as 'the audiolingual' were often used to teach learners how to use the target language communicatively (see Larsen-Freeman 1986:43). However, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, CLT has communicative characteristics which are not shared by the traditional approach. For example, a communicative classroom usually provides students with opportunities to use the target language communicatively in the classroom setting; CLT has 'high surrender value' (Wilkins 1976, Johnson 1982) because once students learn an item they can immediately use it communicatively.
2. As Nunan (1989a:12) points out, 'it is something of a misnomer to talk about "the communicative approach" as there is a family of approaches, each member of which claims to be communicative' (see Section 2.3). However, 'the communicative approach' is used here as an umbrella term for the sake of convenience (cf.

Stern 1983:111). The type of CLT that will be followed in the thesis will be discussed in Section 2.3.

3. No distinction between 'university' and 'college/institute' is made in the present study because in China universities, colleges, and institutes all offer 4-year programmes of studies. Those who succeed in their studies are awarded BA (or equivalents) on graduation.
4. Strictly speaking, although it can be used as a practical English grammar course book, Meanings into Words is an integrated course book in general English, which is similar to the course books of the 'Comprehensive English' course in the Chinese ELT curriculum (see Section 5.3).

#### Notes to Chapter 1

1. Chomsky himself actually identifies his concept of linguistic competence with de Saussure's 'langue' (e.g., Chomsky 1964:10, see Sampson 1980:50).
2. It may be false to claim that Hymes coined the term 'communicative competence' and was the very first person to use it, although many writers (e.g., Stern 1983:111) believe so. Hymes (1985:15) makes it clear that the use of the term by Jakobovits (1970b) and Savignon (1972), among others, is independent of his own (also see Scarcella, Andersen, and Krashen

1990:xi). Besides, it may be worth mentioning that Halliday, who rejects Chomsky's dichotomy of competence and performance (Halliday 1970a:145) also refuses to accept Hymes' term 'communicative competence' (Halliday 1978:32), though his work in linguistic studies is similar or very close to that of Hymes.

3. Although Chomsky later (e.g., 1977, 1980) distinguished between two types of competence -- (a) grammatical competence, (b) pragmatic competence -- the term 'competence' here is used to mean 'grammatical competence' as Hymes' criticism of Chomsky's concept is based on Chomsky (1965).
4. Chomsky's 'competence' is sometimes understood as 'the linguistic abilities' of the fluent native speaker/listener in transformational works (e.g., Radford 1988:3). However, I would assume that 'linguistic abilities' is different from 'abilities in using the language', because the former refers to the knowledge of the linguistic system.
5. Read (1984a:x) states that 'the adoption of communicative competence as the goal of language teaching is now commonplace on both sides of the Atlantic'.
6. However, some scholars make no distinction between competence and performance (e.g., Corder 1973:162) while others (e.g., Davies 1989) challenge the competence-performance distinction.
7. The term Allwright used is 'linguistic competence',



not 'grammatical competence'. However, I would assume that both terms can be used interchangeably in the sense he refers to. Similarly, Johnson's (1982:9) use of 'systemic competence' is regarded as equivalent to 'grammatical competence'.

8. For example, Littlewood (1981:1-6), Johnson (1982: 20-21), Larsen-Freeman (1982), Bachman and Palmer (1982), Faerch, Haastrup, and Phillipson (1984:167), Li (1984a/1987b), Di Pietro (see Roberts 1986:56-63), Widdowson (1989), Spolsky (1989), and Davies (1989) all suggest their own understandings (and classifications) of the components of communicative competence.

## Notes to Chapter 2

1. According to Brumfit (1986b:vii), the earliest occurrence of the term 'Communicative Language Teaching' (CLT) is in Candlin's paper (Candlin 1971). Beginning from Section 2.3.4, CLT is used to mean the weak version of CLT, unless specified.
2. It seems that Johnson (e.g., 1983a) inclines to the methodology-oriented view, though his view differs from Widdowson's. Also, I do not intend to say that Wilkins does not pay any attention to methodology. In his later writings (e.g., 1978), he does consider methodology. The discussion here is based on his 1976 book.

3. There are, however, linguists (e.g., Chomsky 1976: 55-57) who argue that the principal function of language is not communication. They believe that language plays a very important part in the development of the intellectual and imaginative life; this part is as important as it is in the co-operative and social life.
4. According to Ur (1988:13), a heterogeneous exercise/task is one which may be done by students at different language levels. A multiple-choice question is not heterogeneously-oriented, whereas an open-ended one usually is.
5. Swan (1985:83), however, argues that as questions of this kind 'have the communicative value of eliciting feedback' in the classroom they are not 'meaningless'.
6. The terms 'task' and 'activity' have been used loosely in the existing literature. Some scholars (e.g., Coleman 1987:145; cf. Richards et al 1985:289; Willis 1990:127) use both terms interchangeably. From now on, I shall follow Nunan (1989a) and regard 'activity' as an element of a task.
7. From now on, the discussion of communicative methodology is restricted to the 'standard' model.
8. Morrow (1981:59) defines 'method' as 'some overall means of achieving the general objectives of a course', which is more or less the same as 'procedure' in Richards and Rodgers' (1986)

framework.

### Notes to Chapter 3

1. Since 'the structural syllabus' and 'the grammatical syllabus' mean roughly the same thing, in the present study the former is used to include the latter. Also, although there are many versions of the structural/situational/notional-functional syllabus, the term in its singular form is used as an umbrella term to cover different versions of the same syllabus type.
2. There is a contradiction between Breen's (1984:160) description of a process syllabus and that of Richards et al (1985:16) in that the former describes the syllabus as 'organising and representing what is to be achieved ...' whereas the latter defines it as something 'posteriori/retrospective'.
3. Throughout the discussion in the thesis the distinction between 'syllabus' and 'curriculum' will be preserved. The definition of 'curriculum' which will be followed is Allen's (1984:61): 'curriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational programme'.
4. Crombie (1989:1-2) argues that if a syllabus is a list which outlines the content of a course then

there is no such thing as a situational (or a procedural) syllabus because a list of situations, topics or tasks cannot constitute a language syllabus.

5. Wilkins (1976:24) regards the terms 'semantic' and 'notional' as largely synonymous.
6. It seems that many writers (e.g., Shaw 1977/1982a; Canale and Swain 1980) equate the notional/functional syllabus with what they call the 'communicative', or the 'contextual' syllabus.
7. Gibbons (1984:143) prefers 'state syllabus' to 'national syllabus' because 'syllabuses are also produced by provincial or state government education departments within single nations'. However, in China provincial education departments usually do not produce syllabuses. Therefore, no distinction will be made here between 'national syllabus' and 'state syllabus'.
8. Johnson (1981a:8, 1982:32) distinguishes 'syllabus inventory' from 'syllabus' by saying that the former is a list of unordered items whereas the latter is a list of ordered ones (cf. Morrow 1978:19).

#### Notes to Chapter 5

1. The programme of four-year studies for English majors at tertiary level is divided into two stages; the first stage (termed as 'Stage-one Education' in

the present study) covers the first two years and the second stage the last two years.

2. 'Comprehensive English' is a new term for 'Intensive Reading' (used in QA1/QB1 in the survey, see Chapter 6), which is a general, integrative course in the university programme dealing with both basic language knowledge (phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, language functions and notions, etc.) and basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation).
3. There are two semesters (called 'terms' in China) in an academic year in China, each of which covers 18 weeks.
4. A sub-syllabus for grammar in CNESSTE (1989) and a sub-syllabus for grammar in ESCFSE (1986) are provided in Appendices 1 and 2.
5. See Note 4 above. From the two sub-syllabuses it can be seen that most grammar items listed in CNESSTE have already been treated in ESCFSE (1986).
6. As far as I know, the book is published in China in at least three different Chinese translations.
7. As these are six or more classes in the same grade in the English Department at GIFL, there are usually two teachers who are responsible for the same grammar course.
8. The course books used were: Eckersley and Eckersley (1960), Thomson and Martinet (1980), and one compilation mainly based on Eckersley and Eckersley

- (1960), Thomson and Martinet (1980) and the other based on Quirk et al (1972), Close (1975), and Leech (1971) by the classroom teachers.
9. Tao Yang, Li Yin, Chen Youlin, Xiao Junhong, and Liu Shuang spent much of their precious time observing lessons and writing detailed reports for me, for which I am very grateful to them.
  10. All the information was true only at the time when the observation took place.
  11. For convenience, 'CECL' is sometimes used to refer to the CECL core course, and CECL 1, CECL 2, etc. are used to refer to the CECL core course 1, 2, etc.
  12. Informal teacher training programmes were conducted at GIFL almost every year during 1983-1987 when the mimeographed versions of the CECL core course were being used in the classroom.
  13. 'Learner-oriented', used by Li (1984a/1987b), seems to be similar to 'quasi-learner-centred'. The difference may be in the choice between 'oriented' and 'centred'.
  14. 'Activity' in CECL seems a larger term than 'task' (defined in Section 2.6). The language unit in CECL is made up of activities. There is no clear distinction between 'activity' and 'task' made in CECL. Malcolm and Malcolm's (1988:11) analysis of the activities in Unit 1, CECL 1 (Meeting People) 'shows that there are 50 of them, embracing 22 different activity types'.

15. In China, it has been the practice for graduates to be assigned to work in different places; the criteria for the assignment are very complex and sometimes difficult to understand (e.g., good achievements in studies do not necessarily mean good jobs; female students may not be welcome in some departments and units; if one is from a remote area, one is likely to be sent to work there after graduation).
16. To the best of my knowledge, there are at least 10 versions of 'keys to the exercises' in Xu's English and 4 versions of the translation of the texts in New Concept English (apart from a Chinese version of the whole set of books) published in China during 1978-1988.

#### Notes to Chapter 6

1. Questionnaires A and B (see Appendix 4) were piloted in November 1989 and April 1990 (twice) in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh and were administered between June and July 1990 at GIFL; the questionnaire about defining exercises (see Appendix 5) was completed between July and August 1991. I am very grateful to those who spent their precious time completing the questionnaires: MSc and higher degree students in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh, teachers and students of the English



Department at GIFL, China, nine Chinese ELT trainees who studied in Britain, and the eight ELT professionals in the Institute of Applied Language Studies and Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh. I also wish to thank Diana Allan for her work (1987) which encouraged me to explore the teaching and learning of grammar in the Chinese ELT context.

2. To take examples from Zhang (1981) and Zhang et al (1983) for comparison is not intended in any sense as criticism. The reason for using examples from these books is that both books are the most well-known and widely-used grammar practice books in China. Besides, the exercise types taken for comparison are very typical of grammar practice books published in China.
3. Two features (i.e., 'fluency-based' and 'intervention-free') were not used here because both have little or nothing to do with the exercise itself: 'fluency' is mainly concerned with learners' level of language proficiency in communication; 'intervention-free' refers to the teacher's classroom technique/strategy.
4. The intervals between the variables in all the figures in this chapter are in fact not regular, although they are depicted as such in the text.
5. Strictly speaking, the valid interpretation of Friedman's ANOVA depends on the assumption that the

respondents make a comparison of the variables. However, I would assume that this statistical means could be applied in the present study because the possibility of implicit comparison could be discerned in the questions.

6. As respondents of QA2 and QB2 were allowed to choose more than one item, the total frequency is more than the total number of respondents and the percentage is more than 100. The same is true of QA11 and QB11.
7. Responses here are not statistically comparable because QA5 and QB5 do not ask the same question. Therefore, there is no significant test applied to these two questions.
8. The mean in Table 6.21 is the 'raw' mean while the mean in the pair-wise comparison is the 'justified' mean (i.e., the mean of the ranks after adjustment for tied ranks). These two kinds of mean are not identical. In Table 6.21, the mean of 'discussion' is higher than that of 'role-play' whereas in the pair-wise comparison its rank sum and mean rank are lower than those of 'role-play', as is shown in Tables 6.22 and 6.23.
9. Although the questionnaires were to be completed anonymously, unfortunately (or fortunately), I can identify many of the respondents' handwriting as we have been colleagues for many years.
10. The judgement of whether the respondents are clear about the communicative approach was based on the

interpretations of the communicative approaches discussed in Section 2.3. Besides, as it was unlikely for any respondent to give a complete definition because of lack of the expertise and the time factors, the judgement on the interpretation was not very strict.

#### Notes to Chapter 8

1. The design of this task was influenced by Rea-Dickins and Woods (1988:638).
2. This task is adapted from CECL 1 (Li et al 1987a: 496-500).

#### Notes to Chapter 9

1. As indicated in Section 5.3.1, there are two terms in an academic year in China's present educational system, each of which has 18 weeks. There are 72 hours for the grammar course: generally speaking, 68 hours are spent on classroom teaching and 4 hours are given to two 'end-of-term' examinations. The reasons for having 36 units instead of 34 in the Students' Book are: (a) Some teachers may prefer to have one examination only; (b) The teacher may want to combine some units; (c) It is up to the teacher to decide which unit(s) he would leave out.
2. When the discussion concerns sample materials from

the Students' Book or the Reference Book, sections such as '1.1.1' refer to the sections in the sample materials (see Appendix 7), although the word 'section' is not used so as not to confuse the sections in the sample materials with those in the thesis.

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Note: When an item is shown with two dates (e.g., Davies, A. (1978/1982)), the first date is that of original publication and the second is that of the edition, or volume, or translation which I consulted and to which any page references in the text are made.

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## Appendix 1: A Sub-syllabus for Grammar in CNESSTE

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Notes:

(1) This sub-syllabus (inventory) is taken from China's National English Syllabus for Stage-one Tertiary Education (CNESSTE) (1989:33-54), which includes 5 sub-syllabuses: (a) Phonetics, (b) Grammar, (c) Vocabulary, (d) Notions and functions, and (e) Communicative skills. The grammar sub-syllabus is not a syllabus (inventory) for the grammar course, but is to be incorporated in the teaching content/materials in Stage-one Education (i.e., the first two years in a four-year university programme). When teaching materials are being developed, the course designers and materials writers of the 'Comprehensive English' and 'Grammar' courses are seemingly expected to include most of the items of the sub-syllabus in their course materials.

(2) The grammar items in this sub-syllabus are treated in two rounds -- Grade One, the first round; Grade Two, the second round.

(3) Some of the grammatical terms are not familiar to Chinese readers, in which case alternatives are provided in brackets in translation, where necessary.

(4) The headings and sub-headings of this sub-syllabus are written in Chinese, and have been translated into English by the author. For the sake of convenience for comparison with the grammar 'sub-syllabus' in English

Syllabus for China's Full-time Secondary Education  
(ESCFSE) (1986) (see Appendix 2), some of the headings  
and sub-headings have been re-numbered in the  
translation.

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### Grade One (the first round)

#### 1. Nouns:

##### 1.1 Count nouns:

Take the pullover to the dorm.

Vegetables are good for health.

His teeth chattered with cold.

##### 1.2 Mass nouns:

The bread is not fresh.

Knowledge is power.

I like travel.

#### 2. Determiners:

##### 2.1 Their collocation with three types of nouns:

There are stairways at either end of the corridor.

We have another two meetings this week.

We don't have much news of him.

##### 2.2 The generic, specific and unique use of the article:

The horse has been replaced by the railroad.

Unity is strength.

An ox is a useful animal.

The letter on the desk is yours.

The sun is very bright today.

2.3 The use of 'some' and 'any':

I have some stamps for you.

Did you buy any screws?

Come and see me any day.

3. Pronouns:

3.1 Indefinite pronouns: one, someone, anyone, etc.

Have you any knives? I need a sharp one.

Someone isn't telling the truth.

You can ask anybody any questions you like.

None of his things was touched.

3.2 Possessive pronouns:

May I borrow your pen? Mine is missing.

3.3 The impersonal pronoun 'it':

It's foggy today.

3.4 Reflexive pronouns:

He would allow no one but himself to operate the machine.

4. Tenses and aspects of the verb:

4.1 The simple present tense -- expressing habitual actions, universal truths, present events and states:

He cycles to work every day.

Magnet attracts iron.

I don't want much to eat. I'm not hungry.

4.2 The present progressive tense -- expressing actions happening now or at the present period of

time:

He's answering a telephone call now.

Dick's taking physics this semester.

- 4.3 The simple past tense -- expressing actions and states of definite past time, habitual past actions, and hypothetical use:

He left for Shanghai last week.

He smoked a lot ten years ago.

If you had carbon paper, I could do it.

- 4.4 The past progressive tense -- expressing actions happening at past moments or as the background of other actions:

What were you doing last night at ten o'clock?

He was painting the ceiling when he fell off.

- 4.5 The present perfect tense -- completeness and incompleteness; its use in the structure 'it is the first time (that)...':

He's laid the table.

I haven't smoked for weeks.

Is it the first time you have been in Shanghai?

- 4.6 The past perfect tense -- completeness and incompleteness, expressing unrealised hopes, plans, intentions, etc.; and hypothetical use:

By half past ten, we had already had our English classes.

By six o'clock they had worked for twelve hours.

We had hoped that you would be able to visit us.

If I had known that you were busy last night, I

wouldn't have called.

4.7 The present perfect progressive tense --

expressing actions beginning in the past that are still continuing or that have just completed:

We have been listening to a tape for half an hour.

I've been playing volleyball.

4.8 The past perfect progressive tense -- expressing actions beginning in the past of the past that were still continuing or had just completed by the past moment (then):

John was late. Mary had been waiting for him impatiently.

We had been waiting for him for two hours by the time he came.

5. Expressions of future time:

5.1 will/shall + infinitive; will/shall + be -ing; will/shall + have + -ed; will/shall + have + been + -ing:

He'll call me at six.

What will you be doing this time tomorrow?

I'll be meeting you next week.

You will have completed this course by this time next year.

At the end of this week, I shall have been staying here for three years.

5.2 be going to + infinitive; be to + infinitive; be + -ing; the simple present tense; be about to + infinitive:



He's going to read English literature next semester.

The two delegations are to meet at 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

Are you doing anything special tonight?

The reception is about to begin.

### 5.3 Expressions of future time in the past:

would/should + infinitive; would/should + be + -ing;  
would/should + have + -ed; would/should + have been  
+ -ing:

He said he would call for me at six.

He asked me what I would be doing the next morning.

He hoped that they would have got the crops in by the end of the week.

### 5.4 Expressions of future time in the past: was/were going to + infinitive; was/were + -ing; was/were to + infinitive; was/were about to + infinitive:

I was just going to / was just about to show you that photograph when I was interrupted.

I warned you not to eat so much if you were going to swim/were swimming / were to swim.

## 6. Modal auxiliaries:

### 6.1 Must -- expressing 'obligation' and 'logical necessity'; needn't/don't have to -- expressing 'not necessary'; mustn't -- expressing 'prohibition'; have to -- expressing 'obligation':

In England traffic must keep to the left.

You needn't / don't have to worry about it.

You mustn't stay here.

He's not in the dorm. He must be in the dining-room.

6.2 can/could/be able to -- expressing 'ability'; can  
-- expressing 'possibility', 'permission':

He can finish reading a novel within two days.

Can I be excused from the lecture this week?

It can't be the postman.

6.3 may/might expressing 'possibility' and  
'permission':

It might rain tomorrow.

You may smoke in this room.

6.4 ought to -- expressing 'obligation':

He ought to be here to clean the desks.

6.5 can/may/must/might + be + -ing:

He may be coming tomorrow.

6.6 can/could/may/might/must + have + -ed; needn't +  
have + -ed:

He may have been busy.

You must have been shocked.

You needn't have hurried.

6.7 should/would + have -ed; ought to/should + have +  
-ed:

If it had not been for your help I should have  
been lost.

You should have asked me.

You shouldn't have promised.

You ought to have asked for my permission.

6.8 used to:

He used to smoke a lot.

Did he use to smoke a lot?

He didn't use to smoke a lot.

6.9 dare:

I don't know whether he dare stay.

7. The infinitive clause:

7.1 Used as objects, object complements, subjects, subject complements (predicatives):

Do you know what to say?

It takes two hours to get there.

It's easy for me to do it.

I want you to do it.

We thought it wrong not to tell him the news.

Your mistake was not to write that letter.

7.2 Used as adverbials, noun modifiers (attributives):

I got up early in order to catch the train.

I have a lot of work to do.

Here's a book for you to read.

8. The -ing participle / the -ing clause:

8.1 Used as subjects, objects:

Would you mind opening the window?

Cycling is enjoyable.

We found it dull living here.

It's nice talking to you.

8.2 Used as prepositional objects, object complements, subject complements:

How about changing the subject?

I heard someone knocking.

8.3 Used as adverbials, noun modifiers:

Going down town, I met a friend.

Will the people sitting at the back please keep quiet?

8.4 Used in compound nouns:

writing-desk; operating-table

9. The -ed participle / the -ed clause:

9.1 Used as object complements, subject complements:

I had my watch repaired.

We found her greatly changed.

9.2 Used as noun modifiers:

I want some boiled water.

We are making a study of spoken English.

There were hundreds of guests invited to the reception.

9.3 Used as adverbials:

Charged with theft, he insisted that he was innocent.

10. The passive voice:

10.1 The passive forms in different tenses (and aspects): It is/is being/was/was being/has been/had been/done.

10.2 Modal auxiliaries or semi-auxiliaries + passive infinitive:

It will be / is going to be / is to be / must be / can be / may be / should be / could be done.

## 10.3 The passive voice in the SVOC pattern:

He was made to do it.

He is known to be a good worker.

We were kept waiting.

The safe was broken open.

## 10.4 The passive with the multi-word (phrasal) verb:

He is taken good care of.

## 11. The relative clause (the attributive clause):

## 11.1 Relative clauses introduced by relative pronouns (that, who, which, whose) and relative adverbs (when, where, why):

An aeroplane is a machine that flies in the air.

He's the man who lives next door.

Is this the one you're looking for?

The reason why he came so early is his own affair.

## 11.2 Relative clauses introduced by 'preposition + which/whom' or '(pro)noun + preposition + which/whom':

The manner in which you answered the question was admirable.

I have two brothers, both of whom smoke.

## 11.3 The restrictive and non-restrictive relative clause:

That's the plane that crashed.

The dean, beside whom I was sitting, told me the news.

He arrived half an hour late, which annoyed us

all very much.

12. The nominal clause:

12.1 The object clause: introduced by 'if/whether/when/where/why/how/that/what'; containing an introductory 'it':

Ask Tom where he went on Monday.

Did you ask who would be going with us?

We have made it clear that we will let you go if you do this for us.

12.2 The subject clause: introduced by 'whether/when/where/how/that'; containing an introductory 'it':

What caused the accident has not been found out yet.

It is strange how he did it.

It seems likely that she will refuse the offer.

It is said that everyone cycles today.

12.3 The subject-complement clause (the predicative clause): introduced by 'that/when/how/why/where/what':

My opinion is that he really doesn't understand you.

This is where I found it.

12.4 The appositive clause:

They had to face the fact that the nearest filling station is thirty kilometers away.

13. Co-ordination:

13.1 Connected by 'and/or/but/both...and.../either...or.../neither...nor/not only...but

also...':

We've sold out but we will be getting some.

She was clearly upset, for her eyes were filled with tears.

14. The adverbial clause:

14.1 Adverbial clauses of time: introduced by 'when/ before/after/while/since/until/as soon as/the day/the moment/every time':

We can't do anything about it until we know the facts.

14.2 Adverbial clauses of place: introduced by 'where':

I found my books where I left them.

14.3 Adverbial clauses of reason: introduced by 'as/ since/because':

Since he was not at home, I spoke to his brother.

14.4 Adverbial clauses of purpose: introduced by 'so that/in order that':

We must learn the language well so that we can communicate with the local people.

14.5 Adverbial clauses of result: introduced by 'so that/ so...that.../such...that.../that':

He was ill, so that he didn't come.

He was so angry that he left the room without saying a word.

It was such a bad accident that several people got injured.



14.6 Adverbial clauses of manner: introduced by 'as/  
as if/as though':

I want to speak English as Tom does.

It seems as if someone's coming.

It looks as though someone's following us.

14.7 Adverbial clauses of condition: real and unreal  
conditionals introduced by 'if'; conditionals  
introduced by 'as long as/so long as/unless';  
conditionals introduced by 'if it were not  
for.../if it had not been for...':

If it rains, we'll not go there.

If I were you, I would do it.

He would have come if you had asked him.

If it were not for the expense, I should go  
there.

If it were not for the fact that we knew each  
other so well, I shouldn't have agreed to go  
on that journey with him.

You'll be able to read something so long as you  
persist.

You won't get there in time unless you have a  
car.

14.8 Adverbial clauses of concession: introduced by  
'though/although/even if/even though/whether/  
however/no matter...':

Although I feel much better today, I'm staying  
at home.

Whether he's coming or not, we won't wait.

He won't accept the invitation however hard we try to persuade him.

You're likely to have an accident however you drive.

15. The direct and indirect speeches:

15.1 The indirect speech in the declarative sentence:

'I'm hungry.' --> He says he's hungry.

'I've never met her.' --> He said he'd never met her.

15.2 The indirect speech in the interrogative sentence:

'Are you a doctor?' --> He asks her if she is a doctor.

'Why are you so late?' --> Mary wanted to know why he was so late.

15.3 The indirect speech in the imperative sentence:

'Please don't disturb me.' --> He asked me not to disturb him.

16. Comparisons of adjectives and adverbs:

16.1 The positive, the comparative, and the superlative degree of adjectives and adverbs:

My parcel is as heavy as yours.

They worked even harder than I had expected.

It's the most interesting book I've ever read.

16.2 The structure 'the more...the more':

The more I thought about it, the more I liked it.

17. Prepositions:

17.1 Its collocation with verbs, adjectives, and nouns:

He's not angry at his conduct.

I know him by sight.

18. The sentence:

18.1 The interrogative sentence: beginning with 'Would you like ...', 'Would you ...', 'Shall I ...'; The tag question using the pattern 'Let's ..., shall we?'.

18.2 It-cleft sentence:

It is you that came here yesterday.

19. Prefixes and suffixes:

a. Prefixes: re-, post-, fore-, un-, auto-, co-, de-, mis-, dis-, (over-) under-, ir-, il-, im-, self-, sub-, super-, bi-, tri-, multi-, etc.

b. Suffixes: -er, -ee, -or, -ful, -ly, -ism, -ist, -able, -y, -ish, -ible, -less, -ize, -en, -ward, etc.

### Grade Two (the second round)

20. Nouns:

20.1 The number of abstract nouns, proper nouns, and material nouns:

It's a thousand pities.

There are two Marys in his class.

Are fats a hazard?

20.2 The meanings of the 's genetive (possessive)

case:

the boy's punishment; Dr. Smith's answer

20.3 The number of some nouns ending with -s:

Joe's new trousers are black and white.

20.4 The number of collective nouns:

The team are full of enthusiasm.

21. Determiners:

21.1 The relationship between determiners:

Every such opportunity must be considered.

21.2 The use of 'some', 'any', 'no', etc.:

Didn't you do some work yesterday?

Any child could answer that question.

21.3 The idiomatic use of articles:

I've got a headache.

I've got bad toothache.

22. Pronouns:

22.1 Reflexive pronouns used as objects of the verb:

I availed myself of this opportunity to express  
my thanks to you.

22.2 The use of indefinite pronouns: one, they, we,  
you, he:

If one wants to see the ruins, one must find  
one's own guide.

23. The tense and aspect of the verb:

23.1 The simple present tense: instantaneous present,  
historical present, expression of future time;  
used in the relative clause and the object clause:

Alice tells me you're entering college next

year.

I declare the meeting closed.

I'll see to it that you don't get lost.

23.2 The hypothetical meaning of the simple past tense:

I wondered if I might have a word with you.

23.3 The relationship between the progressive aspect and lexical meaning of the verb; the hypothetical meaning of the progressive aspect:

My foot is aching.

He's being foolish.

I was hoping you could send me some books.

23.4 The since-clause and the present perfect tense and the past perfect aspect tense; the past perfect tense used to express past unrealised hopes, plan, and intentions:

He's written to me frequently since I was ill.

I had meant to call on you, but was prevented from doing so.

23.5 Expressions of future time: a comparison of different expressions of future time; 'was/were going to' used to express unrealised plans; 'was/were to + have + -ed' used to express unbeyed orders/unperformed acts:

I was going to phone you but I just didn't have time.

I know I was to have seen him.

24. Modal auxiliaries:

24.1 Epistemic use: might/may/could/can/should/ought  
to/would/will/must + infinitive:

It may be George.

That couldn't be the house we're looking for,  
surely.

There must be some mistake.

That will have been George.

They must have been waiting a long time.

He might have been pulling my leg.

If they are coming by car, they ought to arrive  
about seven.

24.2 Non-epistemic use: the use of 'should' in the  
dependent clause; 'shall' and 'will' used to  
express 'volition' and 'willingness'; the use of  
'needn't + have + -ed' and 'didn't need to +  
infinitive':

It is decided that we should get everything  
ready by the end of the week.

It is disgraceful that he should act like that.

We propose that someone impartial should take  
the chair.

He needn't have got up early this morning.

He didn't need to get up early this morning.

He shall go whatever you say.

He will go whatever you say.

25. The subjunctive mood:

25.1 The use of the 'be-type' subjunctive in the  
dependent clause:

He ordered that the book be sent at once.

Home is home, be it ever so homely.

It is important that he not be found.

25.2 The use of the 'were-type' subjunctive in the dependent clause:

She speaks to me as if I were deaf.

26. The passive voice:

26.1 The passive with the multi-word verb:

The children are well looked after.

No conclusion was arrived at.

That sort of things should be done away with.

26.2 The 'get-type' passive:

You'll get paid overtime.

Mary's dress got torn.

I got told off yesterday.

26.3 The passive of the non-finite verb:

He enjoyed being flattered.

26.4 The transformation of passive structures:

It is believed that he is ill.

--> He is believed to be ill.

27. The infinitive and the infinitive clause:

27.1 The to-infinitive and the bare infinitive:

There's no choice but to wait till it stops raining.

He decided to write rather than telephone.

27.2 Its collocation with the adjective in the SVC pattern:

Biographies are often interesting to read.



## 27.3 Its collocation with adverbs 'too' and 'enough':

It was too cold for us to go shopping.

It was cold enough to freeze our fingers.

He's too ready to promise.

## 27.4 The transformation from the infinitive clause to the finite clause, when the former is used as object or adverbial:

The Italian soccer team played so successfully  
as to defeat the Brazilians.

--> The Italian soccer team played so  
successfully that they defeated the  
Brazilians.

## 28. The -ing participle and the -ing clause:

## 28.1 The logical subject of the -ing clause used as the object of a verb; the passive form of the -ing clause used as the object of a preposition:

My friend can't understand your treating him  
like that.

On being taken to the scene of the crime, he  
broke down and confessed everything.

## 28.2 Verbs that take -ing clauses as objects:

He never contemplated coming with us on this  
trip.

To accept his terms would involve my going  
bankrupt in a year or two.

## 28.3 Used in compound nouns:

fast-moving traffic

Life-saving equipment saves lives.

## 28.4 The perfective form of the -ing participle:

Not having been there, I can't say anything about it.

Not having been to his house, I can't describe it to you.

Forgive me for having interrupted you.

He denied having entered her room.

## 29. The -ed participle and the -ed clause:

## 29.1 Used as post-modifiers:

Things seen are mightier than things heard.

The novel is the best of its kind ever written.

## 29.2 Used as adverbials:

Heated, water changes into steam.

## 29.3 Used in compound adjectives:

His action was well-meant.

## 30. Adjectives/Adjectival phrases:

## 30.1 Adjectival phrases used as post-modifiers:

I know the actor suitable for the part.

## 30.2 The use of 'determiner + adjective':

The wise look to the wiser for advice.

The War Office issued a list of the missing.

## 31. The comparison of adjectives and adverbs:

## 31.1 The transformation of comparative structures:

John is the oldest boy in the school.

--> John is older than any other boy in the school.

## 31.2 The position of the noun in the comparative structure:

George is as efficient a worker as Jack.

George is a more efficient worker than Jack.

He is more of a sportsman than his brother.

31.3 The use of certain comparative structures: 'no more... than', 'no less ... than', 'not ... any more than', 'not so much ... as', etc.:

The present crisis is much more a political than an economic one.

John is no better than Tom.

A whale is no more a fish than a horse is.

32. Prepositions and prepositional phrases:

32.1 Their collocation with adjectives, nouns, and verbs:

Jane is very generous with her money.

I prevail on him to make the attempt.

A young man should be on his guard against bad company.

32.2 The transformation from prepositional phrases to finite clauses:

Did anyone inform you of the change of the plans?

--> Did anyone inform you that the plans had been changed?

32.3 The ellipsis of prepositions:

They had a daughter (of) my age.

33. Adverbials:

33.1 Adjunct: types, positions, and the use:

Sam worked deep into the night.

## 33.2 Disjunct: types, positions, and the use:

Even more important, he is in charge of the project.

Frankly, I'm tired of it.

## 33.3 Conjunct: types, positions, and the use:

The house is not big enough for us, and further more, it is too far from town.

This project won't work: for a start, it's bad idea, and secondly, it'll cost too much.

## 34. Tag questions:

## 34.1 Structures of the tag question:

There's no help for it, is there?

Nobody phoned while I was out, did they?

## 34.2 The main use of the tag question:

-- That wasn't very polite of him.

-- No, it wasn't, was it?

## 35. The existential sentence:

## 35.1 The non-finite form of the verb in the existential sentence:

It was unusual for there to be so few people in the street.

John was relying on there being another opportunity.

## 35.2 The finite form of the verb in the existential sentence (verbs other than 'be'):

There rose in his imagination visions of a world empire.

## 36. Co-ordination:

## 36.1 The various forms of co-ordination:

She opened the door, turned on the light, sat down at the desk and began to work.

## 36.2 The meaning and use of co-ordinators:

He heard a cry for help, and he rushed out of the house.

## 37. Subordination:

## 37.1 Non-finite clauses with subjects (absolute structures):

His voice drowned by the noise, the speaker interrupted his lecture.

He went off, gun in hand.

Jim climbed slowly up the mountain, his courage slipping away at every step.

## 37.2 Verbless clauses:

Fearless, they fought the last battle.

An excellent speaker, he was never at a loss for a word.

If in doubt, ask me.

## 37.3 The transformation from non-finite clauses to finite clauses:

The accused declared himself to be innocent.

--> The accused declared that he was innocent.

## 38. The relative clause:

## 38.1 The choice of a 'relative word (pronoun/ adverb)':

He's changed. He's not the man (that) he was.

Only take such language as is really essential.

## 38.2 Double relative clauses:

She's the only girl I know who can play the guitar.

## 38.3 The transformation from relative clauses to other types of clause:

He got lost on Snowdon, which was enveloped in fog.

--> He got lost on Snowdon, when it was enveloped in fog.

## 39. Conditionals:

## 39.1 The matching of verbs in real conditionals:

If he hadn't come in then, he won't come in at all this morning.

## 39.2 The independence of conditionals:

Suppose that we wanted to learn to make furniture. What would you do first?

## 39.3 The inversion in conditionals:

I will go, should it be necessary.

## 39.4 Conditionals introduced by 'providing that', 'on condition that', 'in case', etc.:

I'll lend you the money on condition that you return it within six months.

## 39.5 Other ways of expressing condition:

But for the rain we should have had a pleasant journey.

## 40. The direct and indirect speeches:

## 40.1 Indirect speeches in the declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory

sentence:

'What beautiful weather!'

--> He commented on the beautiful weather.

#### 40.2 Indirect speeches in mixed sentences:

Don't worry. I'm quite sure there will be no difficulty.

--> He assured her that there would be no difficulty.

#### 40.3 The free indirect speech:

So that was their plan, was it? He well knew their tricks, and would show them a thing or two before he was finished.

### 41. Concord:

#### 41.1 The concord between the subject and the predicate:

Three years in a strange land seems like a long time.

#### 41.2 The concord with the co-ordinated subject:

Pancakes and syrup is a tasty breakfast.

#### 41.3 The concord in the relative clause, the cleft sentence, and the existential sentence:

It is me who is to blame.

#### 41.4 The concord with pronouns:

If anyone calls, tell him I'll be back soon.

### 42. Postponement, fronting, and inversion:

#### 42.1 The end-focus and the end-weight:

It's fun being a hostess.

He gave the car a push.



## 42.2 Postponement:

I owe it to you that the jury acquitted me.

## 42.3 Fronting and inversion; total inversion and partial inversion:

Never have I found him in such a good mood.

The door burst open and in rushed the crowd.

What he was doing there, I can't imagine.

## 43. Ellipsis:

## 43.1 Ellipsis in co-ordination:

His suggestions made John happy, but Mary angry.

## 43.2 Ellipsis in subordination:

Although told to stop, he kept on working.

While reading, make a note of all the new words.

## Appendix 2: A Sub-syllabus for Grammar in ESCFSE

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Notes:

(1) The English syllabus in English Syllabus for China's Full-time Secondary Education (ESCFSE) (1986) is made up of four parts: (a) Aims, purposes, and requirements, (b) Teaching principles, (c) Teaching methods and techniques, and (d) Teaching content. The part of teaching content consists of components of phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar. The following items are taken from the grammar component (ESCFSE 1986:14-24).

(2) Some of the grammatical terms used in this grammar 'sub-syllabus' (inventory) are old-fashioned; therefore, new terms are given in brackets in the translation, where necessary.

(3) Except for examples, the syllabus was written in Chinese. The present sub-syllabus was translated by the author. For the sake of convenience for comparison with the grammar sub-syllabus in China's National English Syllabus for Stage-one Tertiary Education (CNESSTE 1989) (see Appendix 1), some headings and sub-headings of the present sub-syllabus have been numbered or re-numbered in the translation.

-----

## Form One

1. The parts of speech.
2. Nouns:
  - 2.1 The formation of the plural forms of nouns (e.g., books, radios, buses, tomatoes, stories, knives, men).
  - 2.2 Proper nouns (e.g., John, English, Thursday, March, Young Pioneer).
  - 2.3 The possessive (genitive) case of nouns (e.g., Mike's mother, teachers' room).
  - 2.4 Mass nouns (e.g., water, tea, milk).
3. Pronouns:
  - 3.1 Nominative case and objective case of the pronoun.
  - 3.2 Possessive adjectives (e.g., my, your, his).
  - 3.3 Possessive pronouns (e.g., mine, yours)
  - 3.4 Demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those).
  - 3.5 Indefinite pronouns (some, any, no).
  - 3.6 Interrogative pronouns (what, who, whose, which).
4. Cardinal numerals (from 1 to 100) and Ordinal numerals (from 1 to 100).
5. Commonly-used prepositions.
6. The formations (i.e., -er, -est) of the comparative

and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and their basic use (e.g., Rose is taller than Mary. Who is the tallest of the three? A truck goes faster than a bike.).

7. Verbs:

7.1 The affirmative, negative and interrogative forms of 'be', 'have' and the 'there-be' structure.

7.2 The simple present tense (expressing the present state and the habitual action).

7.3 The present progressive tense (expressing the action that is incomplete and is still continuing at the moment of speaking).

8. Types of sentences (the declarative sentence, the interrogative sentence, the imperative sentence, the exclamatory sentence).

Form Two

9. Types of verb:

9.1 The use of main verbs (transitive verbs and intransitive verbs).

9.2 Linking verbs (e.g., be, look, grow, turn, get) and their use with the predicative (subject complement).

9.3 Auxiliaries such as 'be', 'do', 'will', 'shall', 'have' and their functions in the sentence.

9.4 The meaning and use of modal auxiliaries such as 'can', 'may', and 'must'.

- 9.5 The use of 'needn't' in answers/responses.
- 10. The futurity of 'be going to'.
- 11. Tenses:
  - 11.1 The use of the future tense, the simple past tense, the past progressive tense and the present perfect tense with some adverbials;
  - 11.2 The difference(s) in use between the simple past tense and the present perfect tense.
- 12. The formations (i.e., more, most) of the comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs and their use, and the equal comparison structure (e.g., This story is more interesting than that one. He writes the most carefully in our class. Jane is as tall as Kate.).
- 13. Reflexive pronouns (e.g., myself, himself).
- 14. Articles:
  - 14.1 The indefinite article (e.g., a book, an apple, an hour).
  - 14.2 The definite article (e.g., Where is the teacher? the capital of China, the earth, the first, the Great Wall, by the way).
  - 14.3 The absence of the article (The zero article) (e.g., ink, winter, breakfast, Sunday, Class Two, in time).
- 15. Kinds of sentences (the simple sentence, the compound sentence, the complex sentence).
- 16. Sentence elements
  - 16.1 The subject, the predicate, the predictive, the

object, the object complement, double objects,  
the attributive, the adverbial.

16.2 The five basic (verb) patterns in the simple  
sentence.

17. The adverbial clause.

18. The use of infinitives (as adverbials, as objects and  
object complements).

19. Types of interrogative sentences (general questions  
(yes-no questions), special questions (wh-questions),  
alternative questions, disjunctive (tag) questions).

### Form Three

20. The use of conjunctions (summarising the use of  
'and', 'but', 'or', 'for', 'if', 'because' etc.).

21. The future-in-the-past tense (including the use of  
'was/were going to do, would do').

22. The past perfect tense.

23. The passive voice (in the simple present tense, the  
simple past tense, the simple future tense, the  
present perfect tense, and sentences with modal  
auxiliaries).

24. The use of the infinitive (as subjects, predicatives,  
and attributives and with wh-words).

25. The use of 'it' (referring to time, distance, natural  
phenomenon, etc.).

26. The object clause.

27. The direct and indirect speeches.

## Form Four

- 28. The attributive (relative) clause
- 29. The nominal clause (the subject clause, the predicative clause, the appositive clause).
- 30. Word-formation.
- 31. Modal auxiliaries (continued).
- 32. The participles (used as attributives, predicatives, object complements, adverbials).
- 33. The gerund (used as subjects, objects, predicatives, attributives).

## Form Five

- 34. The gerund (the perfective form, the passive form, the complex structure).
- 25. The subjunctive mood.
- 36. The use of 'it' (as a pronoun, an introductory word, and in the 'it is ... that' structure).
- 37. The inversion.

## Form Six

- 38. Dealing with new grammar phenomena in texts.



Appendix 3: A Checklist for Classroom Observation  
( a grammar lesson)

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Note: This checklist was translated into Chinese before it was sent to observers in China in June 1990, because it was believed that the observers could understand the Chinese version better and that it would be easier for them to give comments in Chinese.

-----

1. General information

Department, University:

Date of observation:

Observer: (age, academic qualification, etc.)

2. The teacher

(1) age

(2) academic status

(3) teaching experience (e.g., How long has he been teaching English to university students? When did he begin to teach grammar as a course?)

(4) other information: e.g., study abroad ? (If yes, when? for how long? Did he get any degree(s)?)

3. The students

(1) age

(2) grade (i.e., in which year of their studies)

- (3) motivation/attitude/reaction

4. The lesson

- (1) class size (i.e., how many students)
- (2) the arrangement of classroom furniture
- (3) total time of the lesson (one 50 minutes lesson or two?)
- (4) course book (If compiled by the classroom teacher, please describe it in detail -- e.g., how content is organised, the coverage, the underlying assumptions, principles, etc. If the book is adapted from another book, please write down the 'source book(s)').)
- (5) the teaching strategies/techniques and the classroom procedures (e.g., Does the teacher follow the procedures/sequences in the course book?)
- (6) Does the teacher review the main points of the last lesson with the students?
- (7) grammatical topic/structure(s) being taught
- (8) focus of the lesson (e.g., grammatical concepts, terms, rules, usage or use of the rules)
- (9) Is the lesson lecture-based or activity-based? (If activity-based, please describe it in detail.)
- (10) Do students ask questions? (If yes, when, why, under what circumstances, etc.)
- (11) how much of the time is the teacher talking time (percentage of the total class time)
- (12) how much of the time is the students talking

time (percentage of the total class time)

(13) the presentation of examples (i.e., Are examples presented orally or written on the blackboard? Any other ways of giving example sentences?)

(14) medium of instruction (e.g., English, Chinese; if mixed, give the proportion used of each and describe when and why English/Chinese is used.)

(15) exercises done in class? If yes, what types? How many? In what kind of classroom groupings (e.g., individual work, pair-work, group-work, whole-class work) and classroom activities (e.g., pattern drills, questions and answers, filling in gaps, transformations, translation, discussion, role play, problem solving, etc.)? If no, are students assigned any homework? (If yes, how will/does the teacher check the students' work?)

#### 5. Steps of the lesson

(Describe in detail the different steps of the actual grammar teaching, e.g., what does the teacher first do/say? What happens next? What teaching strategies/techniques does the teacher use?)

#### 6. Comments

(As an observer, comment on this kind of classroom practice and express your general impression of the lesson. Then describe in as much detail as you can the teacher's classroom performance and students' reactions to it and their apparent degree of motivation.)

## Appendix 4: Questionnaires A and B

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Note:

There are three sections in this appendix: (1) Questionnaire A (for students); (2) Questionnaire B (for teachers); (3) The Chinese version of Questionnaire A (QA) and Questionnaire B (QB).

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## 1. Questionnaire A (for students)

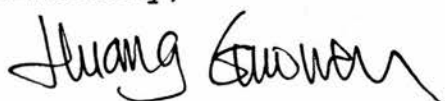
Dear student,

Language programmes are often planned without consulting the students, but very often the students' ideas and expectations are essential to successful course planning.

I am investigating the teaching and learning of English grammar and would like you to give your ideas and opinions on it. Your responses will be regarded as confidential so please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

I thank you in advance and hope that you will find this questionnaire interesting and easy to answer.

Yours sincerely,

-----  
Note:

Please answer the questions by either circling the appropriate answers/numbers or filling in the blanks provided. Examples of questions are given below.

## Examples:

(1) Do you think one can learn English well without learning its vocabulary?

NO 1 YES 2

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

(2) How do you like studying vocabulary?      dislike                      like

1   2   3   4   5   6

NOW PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

1. How important is each of the following courses in the university programme? Put the number in the box according to what you think the order of importance is. (You may use a number more than once.)

1 = least important to 5 = most important

listening	—	phonetics	—
speaking	—	grammar	—
intensive reading	—	vocabulary	—
extensive reading	—	translation	—
writing	—		

2. What is/are the best way(s) to learn English in China? (e.g. reading English materials, talking with people in English, memorising words and grammar rules, doing pattern drills, listening to recordings and radios, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. In learning grammar, how important are the following?

	not at all important			very important		
a) learning the grammatical rules	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) learning the grammatical terms	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) learning how to use the rules	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. How much do you like to be given lectures on grammar?

dislike				like	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. How often do you memorise grammatical rules?

never				always	
1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Have you taken a grammar course during your studies in the university?

NO 1 YES 2

If NO, go to question 9. If YES, answer questions 7 & 8.

7. How good do you think your grammar course book is ?

very bad				very good	
1	2	3	4	5	6

8. What is the title and author(s) of the grammar book?

\_\_\_\_\_

dislike      like

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| speaking | writing |
|----------|---------|

a) afraid	1	1
b) nervous	2	2
c) embarrassed	3	3
d) other (please specify)	_____	_____

12. How often do you think of grammar rules when you

	never					always
a) speak English	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) write English	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. What do you think of the following classroom groupings?

	dislike					like
a) individual work	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) pairwork	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) group work	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) whole-class work	1	2	3	4	5	6

14. How much do you like the following classroom activities?

	dislike					like
a) role-play	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) pattern drills	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. How much do you like the CECL core course book?

	dislike					like
	1	2	3	4	5	6



Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

16. Which of the following strategies do you prefer?

a) To learn different meanings of the same structure in one lesson (e.g., to learn the three meanings (permission, possibility, ability) of CAN together ). 1

b) To learn different structures which express the same meaning in one lesson (e.g., to learn CAN, MAY, WILL, LIKELY, PROBABLY, PERHAPS, etc together to express the meaning of POSSIBILITY). 2

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

17. The following three exercises are designed to practise Wh-questions. Decide which you think is the best and which is the worst.

=====

#### Exercise 1

A famous American actress, Mary Brown, is coming to visit our university soon. You'll have a chance to ask her 7 to 10 questions. Write down the questions that you'd like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Now compare your questions with those of your partner's and decide which questions are more important than others.

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike					like
		1	2	3	4	5 6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
=====

Exercise 2

Ask Wh-questions to which the following statements are answers (the key words in each answer are underlined).

- 1. The post office is in the grey building.
- 2. It's Kitty's turn to speak.
- 3. The train is due to arrive at seven thirty.
- 4. My uncle is a rather queer little old man.
- 5. He comes from a bourgeois family.
- 6. Today is Thursday.
- 7. I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon.
- 8. I plan to go to Soochow for a visit tomorrow.
- 9. The flowers we found there were blue.

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike	like
	1 2 3 4 5 6	

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
=====

Exercise 3

Li Li ( 李力 ), a Chinese film journalist, is going to interview an American actress, Mary Brown. Before he goes to meet her, he has prepared the following notes:

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 新电影名 ( Title of new film? ) | 6. 制片厂 ( Studio? )           |
| 2. 她的角色 ( Her part in it? )    | 7. 导演 ( Director(s)? )       |
| 3. 她的搭档 ( Her co-star? )       | 8. 发放日期 ( Date of release? ) |
| 4. 他的角色 ( His part? )          | 9. 所花经费 ( Cost of film? )    |
| 5. 多少个主要演员 ( No. of actors? )  |                              |

Imagine that you are the interpreter and you'll have to ask the questions for Li Li. Now write down the questions that you'll ask Mary Brown during the interview.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike		like	
	1	2	3	4
	5	6		

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

- - - - -

Now please look at the above three exercises (1, 2, & 3) again and range them along the following line:

DISLIKE <-----no opinion-----> LIKE

Exercise    Exercise    Exercise

18. The following two exercises (4 & 5) are designed to practise the adverbial clause of reason. Please decide how much you like them and give reasons.

=====

**Exercise 4**

Read the following sentences and then answer the questions.

Mary was annoyed	that Tom had broken her cup.
Miss Lee looked disappointed	that she hadn't been invited.
Joe felt very sad	that he had failed in the exam.
Louise felt ashamed	that she had made so many mistakes.

- 1) Why was Mary annoyed?
- 2) Why did Miss Lee look disappointed?
- 3) Why did Joe feel very sad?
- 4) Why did Louise feel ashamed?

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike	like
	1 2 3 4 5 6	

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

=====

### Exercise 5

A British journalist is coming to interview you about your studies at the university. The following are some of the questions that he may ask. Think about them and give your reasons.

1. Why did you come to study English in this institute?
2. Why didn't you go to study in Beijing University?
3. Why do you want to study English?
4. Do you think English is difficult to learn? Why?

Now ask your neighbour the above questions and write down the reasons he gives.

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike	like
	1 2 3 4 5 6	

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Now please look at the two exercises (4 & 5) again and decide which you like better.

DISLIKE <-----> LIKE

Exercise \_\_\_\_ <-----> Exercise \_\_\_\_

19. The following two exercises (6 & 7) are designed to practise the degree of comparison of the adjective. Please decide how much you like each of them. Then say which of the two you like better.

=====

### Exercise 6

Work in groups. Express your opinion about each of the activities in the list below. The following are some examples:

I think learning Japanese is difficult.  
 Well, I think learning Japanese is more/less difficult than learning English.  
 But I think learning Japanese is the most/least difficult of all the activities.  
 In my opinion, learning Japanese is as difficult as learning English.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Useful adjectives</u>
learning French	exciting
reading poems	easy
watching television	dull
play the piano	interesting
stamp collecting	safe
mountain climbing	dangerous
skiing	rewarding
fishing	
sewing	
swimming	

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike					like
	1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

=====

### Exercise 7

Complete the following sentences by using the positive, comparative or superlative of the adjective in brackets:

1. He looked as \_\_\_\_\_ a brick wall. (nervous)
2. His new book's much \_\_\_\_\_ than his last. (interesting)
3. You're \_\_\_\_\_ person I've met. (annoying)
4. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ of the four girls in the family. (nice)
5. Mont Blanc is \_\_\_\_\_ all other Alpine peaks. (high)
6. I like Betty and Maud, but I think Betty's \_\_\_\_\_ of the two. (nice)
7. You're far \_\_\_\_\_ I am. (tolerant)
8. Is your mother any \_\_\_\_\_ ? (relaxed)
9. She's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Smith girls. (sensible)

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike						like
		1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Now please look at the two exercises (6 & 7) again and decide which you like better.

DISLIKE <-----> LIKE

Exercise \_\_\_\_ <-----> Exercise \_\_\_\_

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

## 2. Questionnaire B (for teachers)

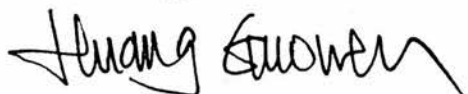
Dear teacher,

Language programmes are often planned without consulting the teachers, but very often the teachers' ideas and expectations are essential to successful course planning.

I am investigating the teaching and learning of English grammar and would like you to give your ideas and opinions on it. Your responses will be regarded as confidential so please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

I thank you in advance and hope that you will find this questionnaire interesting and easy to answer.

Yours sincerely,



Note:

Please answer the questions by either circling the appropriate answers/numbers or filling in the blanks provided. Examples of questions are given below.

Examples:

(1) Do you think one can learn English well without learning its vocabulary? NO 1 YES 2

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

(2) How much do you like teaching vocabulary?

dislike like

1 2 3 4 5 6

NOW PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

1. How important is each of the following courses in the university programme? Put the number in the box according to what you think the order of importance is. (You may use a number more than once.)

1 = least important to 5 = most important

listening	—	phonetics	—
speaking	—	grammar	—
intensive reading	—	vocabulary	—
extensive reading	—	translation	—
writing	—		

2. What is/are the best way(s) to learn English in China? (e.g., reading English materials, talking with people in English, memorising words and grammar rules, doing pattern drills, listening to recordings and radios, etc.)

---



---



---

3. In learning grammar, how important are the following?

	not at all important			very important		
a) learning the grammatical rules	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) learning the grammatical terms	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) learning how to use the rules	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Would you like to give lectures if you are to teach grammar to second-year university students of English? NO 1 YES 2



Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

5. How often do you ask your students to memorise grammatical rules?

never                      always

1   2   3   4   5   6

6. Have you ever given (taught) a grammar course to university students?

NO      1              YES      2

If NO, go to question 9.      If YES, answer questions 7 & 8.

7. How good do you think the grammar course book (you use/d) is ?

very bad                      very good

1   2   3   4   5   6

8. What is the title and author(s) of the grammar book?

---

9. Consider the following strategies/techniques of teaching and learning grammar in the classroom. Decide how much you like each strategy/technique. (Circle only one number on each line)

dislike                      like

a) teacher gives the rules of what is right and what is wrong

1   2   3   4   5   6

b) teacher explains the rules

1   2   3   4   5   6

c) teacher explains the grammatical terms

1   2   3   4   5   6

d) teacher draws students' attention to grammar point but does not give rules

1   2   3   4   5   6

e) teacher lectures on grammar and students listen and take notes

1   2   3   4   5   6

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| f) students learn rules subconsciously from listening to and reading English             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| g) students do drills and exercises on a specific grammar point                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| h) students practise certain grammar items by doing certain kind of classroom activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| i) students discover for themselves by studying examples of grammar points               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| j) students memorise rules   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

10. Which of the two do you think is more important in learning English?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) being able to speak English fluently with some grammatical mistakes | 1 |
| b) being able to speak English slowly without grammatical mistakes     | 2 |

11. How do you think your students feel when they make grammatical mistakes in their speaking and writing? (You can choose more than one.)

	speaking	writing
a) afraid	1	1
b) nervous	2	2
c) embarrassed	3	3
d) other (please specify)	_____	_____

12. What do you think of the following classroom groupings?

	dislike	like
a) individual work	1 2 3 4 5 6	
b) pairwork	1 2 3 4 5 6	
c) groupwork	1 2 3 4 5 6	

13. How much do you like the following classroom activities?

14. Have you ever used the CECL core course book?

15. How much do you like the CECL core course book?

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Can you say what the communicative approach to language teaching is? And what do you think of it?

---

---

If you are not sure what the communicative approach means,  
please put a cross (X) here: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Which of the following strategies do you prefer?

a) To teach different meanings of the same structure in one lesson (e.g., to teach the three meanings (permission, possibility, ability) of CAN together ). 1

b) To teach different structures which express the same meaning in one lesson (e.g., to teach CAN, MAY, WILL, LIKELY, PROBABLY, PERHAPS, etc together to express the meaning of POSSIBILITY). 2

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

19. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ (years old)

20. Are you a(n)

- |                        |                  |              |   |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------|---|
| a) assistant lecturer  | 1                | b) lecturer  | 2 |
| c) associate professor | 3                | d) professor | 4 |
| e) other _____         | (please specify) |              | 5 |

21. Have you ever been abroad to study English? NO 1 YES 2

If YES, to what country? \_\_\_\_\_ for how  
long? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Have you been awarded any academic degrees? NO 1 YES 2

If YES, answer Question 23. (You can choose more than one.)

23. You have got

- |                |                   |                         |   |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| a) one BA.     | 1                 | b) more than one BA     | 2 |
| c) one MA/MSc. | 3                 | d) more than one MA/MSc | 4 |
| e) other _____ | (please specify). |                         | 5 |

24. The following three exercises are designed to practise Wh-questions. Decide which you think is the best and which is the worst.

=====

### Exercise 1

A famous American actress, Mary Brown, is coming to visit our university soon. You'll have a chance to ask her 7 to 10 questions. Write down the questions that you'd like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Now compare your questions with those of your partner's and decide which questions are more important than others.

=====

How much do you like this exercise?	dislike					like
		1	2	3	4	5 6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

=====

### Exercise 2

Ask Wh-questions to which the following statements are answers (the key words in each answer are underlined).

1. The post office is in the grey building.
  2. It's Kitty's turn to speak.
  3. The train is due to arrive at seven thirty.
  4. My uncle is a rather queer little old man.
  5. He comes from a bourgeois family.
  6. Today is Thursday.
  7. I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon.
  8. I plan to go to Soochow for a visit tomorrow.
  9. The flowers we found there were blue.
- =====

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

=====

Li Li ( 李力 ), a Chinese film journalist, is going to interview an American actress, Mary Brown. Before he goes to meet her, he has prepared the following notes:

- Imagine that you are the interpreter and you'll have to ask the questions for Li Li. Now write down the questions that you'll ask Mary Brown during the interview.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- • • • •

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now please look at the three exercises again and range them along the following line:

DISLIKE <-----no opinion-----> LIKE

Exercise \_\_      Exercise \_\_      Exercise \_\_

25. The following two exercises (4 & 5) are designed to practise the adverbial clause of reason. Please decide how much you like them and give reasons.

#### Exercise 4

Read the following sentences and then answer the questions.

Mary was annoyed	that Tom had broken her cup.
Miss Lee looked disappointed	that she hadn't been invited.
Joe felt very sad	that he had failed in the exam.
Louise felt ashamed	that she had made so many mistakes.

- 1) Why was Mary annoyed?
- 2) Why did Miss Lee look disappointed?
- 3) Why did Joe feel very sad?
- 4) Why did Louise feel ashamed?

How much do you like this exercise?      dislike      like

1   2   3   4   5   6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### Exercise 5

A British journalist is coming to interview you about your studies at the university. The following are some of the questions that he may ask. Think about them and give your reasons.

1. Why did you come to study English in this institute?
2. Why didn't you go to study in Beijing University?
3. Why do you want to study English?
4. Do you think English is difficult to learn? Why?

Now ask your neighbour the above questions and write down the reasons he gives.

=====

How much do you like this exercise?                      dislike                      like

   1   2   3   4   5   6

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Now please look at the two exercises (4 & 5) again and decide which you like better.

DISLIKE <-----> LIKE

Exercise \_\_\_\_ <----> Exercise \_\_\_\_

26. The following two exercises (6 & 7) are designed to practise the comparison of the adjective. Please decide how much you like each of them. Then say which of the two you like better.

=====

### Exercise 6

Work in groups. Express your opinion about each of the activities in the list below. The following are some examples:

I think learning Japanese is difficult.  
 Well, I think learning Japanese is more/less difficult than learning English.  
 But I think learning Japanese is the most/least difficult of all the activities.  
 In my opinion, learning Japanese is as difficult as learning English.

#### Activities

learning French  
 reading poems  
 watching television  
 play the piano  
 stamp collecting  
 mountain climbing  
 skiing  
 fishing  
 sewing  
 swimming

#### Useful adjectives

exciting  
 easy  
 dull  
 interesting  
 safe  
 dangerous  
 rewarding



Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Complete the following sentences by using the positive, comparative or superlative of the adjective in brackets:

1. He looked as \_\_\_\_\_ a brick wall. (nervous)
2. His new book's much \_\_\_\_\_ than his last. (interesting)
3. You're \_\_\_\_\_ person I've met. (annoying)
4. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ of the four girls in the family. (nice)
5. Mont Blanc is \_\_\_\_\_ all other Alpine peaks. (high)
6. I like Betty and Maud, but I think Betty's \_\_\_\_\_ of the two. (nice)
7. You're far \_\_\_\_\_ I am. (tolerant)
8. Is your mother any \_\_\_\_\_ ? (relaxed)
9. She's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Smith girls. (sensible)

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Exercise      <---->    Exercise

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

## 3. The Chinese version of Questionnaires A and B

## 问 卷 A (学生用)

年级: \_\_\_\_\_

亲爱的同学,

人们在设置语言课程时往往不征求学生的意见;但是,在大多数情况下,学生的想法和愿望对成功的语言课程的设置至关重要。我们目前在调查英语语法教学情况,希望您能通过这份问卷表达您的意见和想法。我们将对您的回答予以保密;因此,不必在答卷上写上您的名字。对您的合作我们预先表示感谢。希望您觉得这份问卷有趣并且不难回答。

英语课程设置小组

答卷说明:在做问卷时请视具体问题适当画圈、标号、填空,或具体回答。例如:

(1) 您是否觉得一个人可以不必学习英语词汇就能掌握英语?  
否 ① 是 2

为什么? 因为词汇是.....

(2) 您对学习英语词汇的兴趣如何? 毫无兴趣  $\longleftrightarrow$  很有兴趣  
1 2 3 ④ 5 6

现在请回答下列问题:

1. 在所设置的课程中,您觉得下列各门课的重要性如何? 请用数字(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)表示它们的重要性。(1=毫不重要 5=非常重要)(可以不止一次使用某个(些)数字)

听力课 ☐泛读课 ☐语法课 ☐口语课 ☐写作课 ☐词汇课 ☐精读课 ☐语音课 ☐翻译课 ☐

2. 在中国学习英语最好的方法是什么?(常见的方法有: 阅读

各种英文材料，用英语与别人交谈，熟记单词和语法规则，做句型练习，听英语录音或广播，等等)

---



---



---

3. 在学习语法中，下列各项的重要性如何?

毫不重要  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常重要

a. 学习语法规则

1 2 3 4 5 6

b. 学习语法术语

1 2 3 4 5 6

c. 学习怎样运用语法规则

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. 您对以教师讲授为主的语法课兴趣如何?

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么?

---

5. 您是否经常熟记语法规则?

从不记忆  $\longleftrightarrow$  总是记忆

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. 您在大学学习期间是否上过语法课?

否 1 是 2

如果没有上过，请不要回答下面问题7和8。

7. 您觉得该语法课所使用的教材如何?

很不好  $\longleftrightarrow$  很好

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. 请写出该语法课所使用的教材的书名和编写者。

---

9. 下列各项是课堂语法教学常常使用的方法。请标出您对各项方法的喜爱程度。(每项只圈一个数字)

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

- |                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. 教师给出正误的规则             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| b. 教师解释语法规则              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| c. 教师解释语法术语              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| d. 教师提示学生注意语法点, 但不直接给出规则 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| e. 教师讲授语法, 学生听讲并做笔记      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| f. 学生通过听和读下意识地掌握规则       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| g. 学生就具体语法项目做句型练习        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| h. 学生通过某种课堂活动练习特定的语法项目   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| i. 学生通过例句自己找出语法规则        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| j. 学生熟记语法规则              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

10. 在学习英语过程中, 下列两项哪一项更为重要?

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| a. 英语讲得流利但有一些语法错误  | 1 |
| b. 英语讲得不够流利但没有语法错误 | 2 |

11. 您在说和写英语中, 犯了语法错误时感觉如何? (可以不止圈项)

- |                     | 说英语 | 写英语 |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| a. 害怕               | 1   | 1   |
| b. 紧张               | 2   | 2   |
| c. 难为情              | 3   | 3   |
| d. 其他 (请具体回答) _____ | 4   | 4   |

12. 您在说和写英语时经常考虑语法规则吗?

从不考虑 ↔ 总是考虑

- |        |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. 说英语 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| b. 写英语 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

13. 您对下列的各种课堂组合形式的感觉如何?

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

- |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. 单人活动 (individual work) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

b. 双人活动 (pair-work) 1 2 3 4 5 6

c. 小组活动 (group work) 1 2 3 4 5 6

d. 全班活动 (whole-class work) 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. 您对下列各种课堂活动的感觉如何? 很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

a. 角色扮演 (role-play) 1 2 3 4 5 6

b. 讨论 (discussion) 1 2 3 4 5 6

c. 解决问题 (problem solving) 1 2 3 4 5 6

d. 句型练习 (pattern drills) 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. 您对 CECL (《交际英语教程》) 的看法如何?

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

16. 下列两项您更喜欢哪一项?

a. 在一堂课中学习, 某个语法项目的各种不同意义 (例如, can 表示的“允许”、“可能”、“能力”等意义)。 1

b. 在一堂课中学习表示同一意义的不同语法项目 (例如, can, may, will, likely 等都可以表示“可能”这一意义)。 2

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

17. 下面练习 1, 2, 3 是为操练特殊疑问句而设计的。请标出您对它们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。

#### Exercise 1

A famous American actress, Mary Brown, is coming to visit our institute soon. You'll have a chance to ask

her 7 to 10 questions. Write down the questions that you'd like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- .....

Now compare your questions with those of your partner's and decide which questions are more important than others.

请标出您对练习 1 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2

Ask special questions to which the following statements are answers (the key words in each answer are underlined).

1. The post office is in the grey building.
2. It's Kitty's turn to speak.
3. The train is due to arrive at seven thirty.
4. My uncle is a rather queer little old man.
5. He comes from a bourgeois family.
6. Today is Thursday.
7. I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon.
8. I plan to go to Soochow for a visit tomorrow.
9. The flowers we found there were blue.

请标出您对练习 2 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

### Exercise 3

Li Li, (李力), a Chinese film journalist, is going to interview an American actress, Mary Brown. Before he goes to meet her, he has prepared the following notes:

1. 新电影名? (Title of new film?) 6. 制片厂? (Studio?)
2. 她的角色? (Her part in it?) 7. 导演? (Director (s)?)
3. 她的搭档? (Her co-star?) 8. 发放日期? (Date of release?)
4. 他的角色? (His part?) 9. 所花经费? (Cost of film?)
5. 多个个主要演员? (No. of actors?)

Imagine that you are the interpreter and you'll have to ask the questions for Li Li. Now write down the questions that you'll ask Mary Brown during the interview.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....



请标出您对练习 3 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

请您回头再看看练习 1, 2, 3, 作比较后确定您最喜欢哪一个, 最不喜欢哪一个。

最不喜欢

一般

最喜欢

☐
☐
☐

18. 下面练习 4 和 5 是为操练原因从句而设计的。请标出您对它们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。

#### Exercise 4

Read the following sentences and then answer the questions.

Mary was annoyed that Tom had broken her cup.

Miss Lee looked disappointed that she hadn't been invited.

Joe felt very sad

Louise felt ashamed that he had failed in the exam.

that she had made so many mistakes.

- 1) Why was Mary annoyed?
- 2) Why did Miss Lee look disappointed?
- 3) Why did Joe feel very sad?
- 4) Why did Louise feel ashamed?

请标出您对练习 4 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

A 7



为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 5

A British journalist is coming to interview you about your studies at the university. The following are some of the questions that he may ask. Think about them and give your reasons.

1. Why did you come to study English in this institute?
2. Why didn't you go to study in Beijing University?
3. Why do you want to study English?
4. Do you think English is difficult to learn? Why?

Now ask your neighbour the above questions and write down the reasons he gives.

请标出您对练习5的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

请您回头再看看练习4和5, 作比较后  
确定您更喜欢哪一个。

不喜欢 ↔ 喜欢

☐
☐

19. 下面练习 6 和 7 是为操练形容词的比较等级而设计的。请标出您对它们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。

### Exercise 6

Work in groups. Express your opinion about each of the activities in the list below. The following are some examples:

I think learning Japanese is difficult.

Well, I think learning Japanese is more / less difficult than learning English.

But I think learning Japanese is the most / least difficult of all the activities.

In my opinion, learning Japanese is as difficult as learning English.

#### Activities

#### Useful adjectives

learning French

exciting

reading poems

easy

watching television

dull

play the piano

interesting

stamp collecting

safe

mountain climbing

dangerous

skiing

rewarding

fishing

sewing

swimming

请标出您对练习 6 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么?

## Exercise 7

Complete the following sentences by using the positive, comparative or superlative of the adjective in brackets:

1. He looked as \_\_\_\_\_ a brick wall. (nervous)
2. His new book's much \_\_\_\_\_ than his last. (interesting)
3. You're \_\_\_\_\_ person I've met. (annoying)
4. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ of the four girls in the family. (nice)
5. Mont Blanc is \_\_\_\_\_ all other Alpine peaks. (high)
6. I like Betty and Maud, but I think Betty's \_\_\_\_\_ of the two. (nice)
7. You're far \_\_\_\_\_ I am. (tolerant)
8. Is your mother any \_\_\_\_\_? (relaxed)
9. She's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Smith girls. (sensible)

请标出您对练习 7 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

请回头再看看练习 6 和 7, 作比较后  
确定您更喜欢哪一个。

不喜欢 ↔ 喜欢

☐
☐

谢谢您的合作。

## 问 卷 B (教师用)

亲爱的老师:

人们在设置语言课程时往往不征求教师的意见;但是,在大多数情况下,教师的想法和愿望对成功的语言课程的设置至关重要。我们目前在调查英语语法教学情况,希望您能通过这份问卷表达您的意见和想法。我们将对您的回答予以保密;因此,不必在答卷上写上您的名字。对您的合作我们预先表示感谢。希望您觉得这份问卷有趣并且不难回答。

英语课程设置小组

答卷说明:在做问卷时请视具体问题适当画圈、标号、填空,或具体回答。例如:

(1) 您是否觉得一个人可以不必学习英语词汇就能掌握英语?

否 ① 是 2

为什么? 因为词汇是.....

(2) 您对讲授英语词汇的兴趣如何? 毫无兴趣  $\longleftrightarrow$  很有兴趣

1 2 3 ④ 5 6

现在请回答下列问题:

1. 在所设置的课程中,您觉得下列各门课的重要性如何? 请用数字(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)表示它们的重要性。(1=毫不重要 5=非常重要) (可以不止一次使用某个(些)数字)

听力课

☐

泛读课

☐

语法课

☐

口语课

☐

写作课

☐

词汇课

☐

精读课

☐

语音课

☐

翻译课

☐

2. 在中国学习英语最好的方法是什么?(常见的方法有:阅读各种英文材料,用英语与别人交谈,熟记单词和语法规则,做句型练习,听英语录音或广播,等等)

---



---

3. 在学习语法中, 下列各项的重要 毫不重要 $\longleftrightarrow$ 非常重要  
性如何?

a. 学习语法规则 1 2 3 4 5 6

b. 学习语法术语 1 2 3 4 5 6

c. 学习怎样运用语法规则 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. 如果您给大学英语系二年级学生上语法课, 您会以讲座形式上课吗? 不会 1 会 2

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

---

5. 您是否经常要求学生熟记语法规则? 从不要求 $\longleftrightarrow$ 总是要求  
1 2 3 4 5 6

6. 您在大学教学期间是否给学生上过语法课? 否 1 是 2  
如果没有上过, 请不要回答下面问题 7 和 8.

7. 您觉得您上语法课时所使用的教材如何? 很不好 $\longleftrightarrow$ 很好  
1 2 3 4 5 6

8. 请写出该语法教材的书名和编写者.

---

9. 下列各项是课堂语法教学常常使用的方法. 请标出您对各项方法的喜爱程度. (每项只圈一个数字) 很不喜欢 $\longleftrightarrow$ 非常喜欢

a. 教师给出正误的规则 1 2 3 4 5 6

b. 教师解释语法规则 1 2 3 4 5 6



c. 教师解释语法术语	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. 教师提示学生注意语法点, 但不直接给出规则	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. 教师讲授语法, 学生听讲并做笔记	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. 学生通过听和读下意识地掌握规则	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. 学生就具体语法项目做句型练习	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. 学生通过某种课堂活动练习特定的语法项目	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. 学生通过例句自己找出语法规则	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. 学生熟记语法规则	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. 在学习英语过程中, 下列两项哪一项更为重要?

a. 英语讲得流利但有一些语法错误	1
b. 英语讲得不够流利但没有语法错误	2

11. 学生在说和写英语中, 犯了语法错误时他们的感觉如何? (可以不止圈一项)

	说英语	写英语
a. 害怕	1	1
b. 紧张	2	2
c. 难为情	3	3
d. 其他(请具体回答)	4	4

12. 您对下列的各种课堂组合形式的感觉如何?

	很不喜欢	↔	非常喜欢
a. 单人活动 (individual work)	1	2	3 4 5 6
b. 双人活动 (pair-work)	1	2	3 4 5 6
c. 小组活动 (group work)	1	2	3 4 5 6
d. 全班活动 (whole-class work)	1	2	3 4 5 6

13. 您对下列各种课堂活动的感觉如何?

	很不喜欢	↔	非常喜欢
a. 角色表演 (role-play)	1	2	3 4 5 6
b. 讨论 (discussion)	1	2	3 4 5 6

c. 解决问题 (problem solving) 1 2 3 4 5 6

d. 句型练习 (pattern drills) 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. 您教过CECL (《交际英语教程》) 教材吗?

没有 1 有 2

15. 请标出您对CECL的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

16. 您是否认为应该有一本语法书来与CECL教材配套使用?

否 1 是 2

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

如果您的回答是肯定的, 您能推荐一本这样的书吗? (请写上书名)

17. 请说出语言教学中的交际法 (the communicative approach) 指的是什么, 并请谈谈您对交际法的看法。

如果您不知道交际法指的是什么,请在后面的横线上打个叉(X):

18. 下列两项您更喜欢哪一项?

- a. 在一堂课中讲授某个语法项目的各种不同意义(例如, can 表示的“允许”、“可能”、“能力”等意义)。  
b. 在一堂课中讲授表示同一意义的不同语法项目(例如, can, may, will, likely等都可以表示“可能”这一意义)。

为什么?

19. 您今年多少岁? \_\_\_\_\_ (岁)

20. 您是      a. 助教 1      b. 讲师 2      c. 副教授 3  
                d. 教授 4      e. 其它(请具体说明)      5

21. 您出国学习过吗?(研究生, 访问学者, 进修生, 等)

没有 1      出过 2

如果您出国学习过, 请说明哪个国家?

去多长时间?

22. 您曾获得学位吗?

没有 1      有 2

如果没有, 请不要回答下面问题 23。

23. 您获得过      a. 一个学士(BA) 1      b. 两个学士 2  
                c. 一个硕士(MA/MSc) 3      d. 两个硕士 4  
                e. 其他(请具体说明)      5

24. 下面练习 1, 2, 3 是为操练特殊疑问句而设计的。请标出您对他们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。



## Exercise 1

A famous American actress, Mary Brown, is coming to visit our institute soon. You'll have a chance to ask her 7 to 10 questions. Write down the questions that you'd like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Now compare your questions with those of your partner's and decide which questions are more important than others.

请标出您对练习 1 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2

Ask special questions to which the following statements are answers ( the key words in each answer are underlined ).

1. The post office is in the grey building.

2. It's Kitty's turn to speak.

3. The train is due to arrive at seven thirty.

4. My uncle is a rather queer little old man.
5. He comes from a bourgeois family.
6. Today is Thursday.
7. I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon.
8. I plan to go to Soochow for a visit tomorrow.
9. The flowers we found there were blue.

请标出您对练习 2 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢  $\longleftrightarrow$  非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 3

Li Li ( 李力 ), a Chinese film journalist, is going to interview an American actress, Mary Brown. Before he goes to meet her, he has prepared the following notes:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. 新电影名<br>( Title of new film? ) | 6. 制片厂<br>( Studio? )           |
| 2. 她的角色<br>( Her part in it? )    | 7. 导演<br>( Director(s)? )       |
| 3. 她的搭档<br>( Her co-star? )       | 8. 发放日期<br>( Date of release? ) |
| 4. 他的角色<br>( His part? )          | 9. 所花经费<br>( Cost of film? )    |
| 5. 多少个主要演员 ( No. of actors? )     |                                 |

Imagine that you are the interpreter and you'll have to ask the questions for Li Li. Now write down the questions that you'll ask Mary Brown during the interview.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- .....

请标出您对练习 3 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

请您回头再看看练习 1, 2, 3, 作比较后确定您最喜欢哪一个, 最不喜欢哪一个。

最不喜欢

一般

最喜欢

☐
☐
☐

25. 下面练习 4 和 5 是为操练原因从句而设计的。请标出您对它们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。

#### Exercise 4

Read the following sentences and then answer the questions.

Mary was annoyed

that Tom had broken her cup.

Miss Lee looked disappointed

that she hadn't been invited.

Joe felt very sad

that he had failed in the exam.

Louise felt ashamed

that she had made so many mistakes.

- 1) Why was Mary annoyed?
- 2) Why did Miss Lee look disappointed?
- 3) Why did Joe feel very sad?
- 4) Why did Louise feel ashamed?

请标出您对练习 4 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 5

A British journalist is coming to interview you about your studies at the university. The following are some of the questions that he may ask. Think about them and give your reasons.

1. Why did you come to study English in this institute?
2. Why didn't you go to study in Beijing University?
3. Why do you want to study English?
4. Do you think English is difficult to learn? Why?

Now ask your neighbour the above questions and write down the reasons he gives.

请标出您对练习 5 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

请您回头再看看练习 4 和 5, 作比较后确定 不喜欢 ↔ 喜欢  
您更喜欢哪一个。 ☐ ☐

26. 下面练习 6 和 7 是为操练形容词的比较等级而设计的。请标出  
您对它们的喜爱程度并陈述理由。

### Exercise 6

Work in groups. Express your opinion about each of the activities in the list below. The following are some examples:

I think learning Japanese is difficult.

Well, I think learning Japanese is more / less difficult than learning English.

But I think learning Japanese is the most / least difficult of all the activities.

In my opinion, learning Japanese is as difficult as learning English.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Useful adjectives</u>
learning French	exciting
reading poems	easy
watching television	dull
play the piano	interesting
stamp collecting	safe
mountain climbing	dangerous
skiing	rewarding
fishing	
sewing	
swimming	

请标出您对练习 6 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6



为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 7

Complete the following sentences by using the positive, comparative or superlative of the adjective in brackets:

1. He looked as \_\_\_\_\_ a brick wall. (nervous)
2. His new book's much \_\_\_\_\_ than his last. (interesting)
3. You're \_\_\_\_\_ person I've met. (annoying)
4. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ of the four girls in the family. (nice)
5. Mont Blanc is \_\_\_\_\_ all other Alpine peaks. (high)
6. I like Betty and Maud, But I think Betty's \_\_\_\_\_ of the two. (nice)
7. You're far \_\_\_\_\_ I am. (tolerant)
8. Is your mother any \_\_\_\_\_? (relaxed)
9. She's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Smith girls. (sensible)

请标出您对练习 7 的喜爱程度:

很不喜欢 ↔ 非常喜欢

1 2 3 4 5 6

为什么? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

请回头再看看练习 6 和 7, 作比较后确定您更喜欢哪一个。

不喜欢 ↔ 喜欢

☐
☐

谢谢您的合作。

Appendix 5: Evaluation of the 'Communicativeness' of Exercises (a questionnaire)

Dear friend,

I am investigating Chinese teachers' and students' attitudes to different grammar exercise types. Therefore, I need to define the exercises according to whether they are communicative, semi-communicative, or structural on a structural-communicative continuum. I assume that the more 'communicative features' (see below) an exercise has, the more communicative it is. I would be very grateful if you could help me define the 'communicativeness' of the exercises by completing this questionnaire. Could you please (a) Read the 'communicative features' in A, (b) Look at the seven exercises in B, and (c) Fill in the form in C ?

Yours,



A. Communicative Features:

1. appropriate: Appropriacy refers to the suitability of the use of language in a particular sociocultural context.

2. authentic: Authenticity may pertain to the characteristics of the language materials: Authentic materials are anything written or spoken which was not originally intended for language teaching purposes. Authenticity may also refer to the way of doing a task,

to the state of the learner, and to the classroom.

3. challenging: 'Challenging' may pertain to the 'doing' of a task/activity. If a task is challenging, it is not easy to do. However, if a task is too difficult, it will be frustrating whereas if it is too easy, it will be boring and/or de-motivating. A challenging task requires reasoning and strategic abilities.

4. choice-free: The opposite is choice-limited. 'Choice-free' is concerned with the use/choice of forms and meanings. If a task/exercise is choice-limited, the performer has few options to choose; if it is choice-free, he can do almost whatever he likes.

5. contextualised: The opposite is de-contextualised. Contextualisation can be seen linguistically, socially and culturally. If a certain language item is contextualised linguistically, its meaning is not ambiguous because it functions in discourse. If a task is contextualised socioculturally, the nature of the task is appropriate for a particular society and culture.

6. creative: Creativity refers to the learner's performance in production. Exercises/tasks can be designed to promote or limit creativity. If a task is heterogeneously-oriented, it promotes creativity.

7. goal-directed: Goal-directedness refers to the purpose of communication. Addressers perform communicative acts because they want something to happen as a result of what they say. Addressees listen to or



read discourse because they want to find out what ideas and information are being conveyed. If a task is goal-directed, it has communicative purpose(s) and value and the participants have a desire to communicate -- they use language to convey or demand information.

8. integrative: 'Integrative' may be concerned with the use of different language skills and/or the use of different language forms. If a task is integrative, it practises a number of skills and/or different language items at the same time. A pair of related terms is 'indirect/covert' as opposed to 'direct/overt'. Meaningful activities are often integrative.

9. interesting: 'Interesting' may refer to a task/activity itself or to the language and/or ideas it contains. If a task (or its achievement) is interesting, it is often meaningful and it usually promotes learning. If the language (text) and/or ideas in the task is (are) interesting, it also promotes learning, although it may not mean that doing the task is meaningful.

10. learning-centred: The opposite is teaching-centred. Learning-centredness means that the emphasis in pedagogy is on the 'learning' rather than on the 'teaching'. For example, one way for students to learn the differences between 'be going to' and 'will' (when used to express 'future meaning') is for the teacher to give a lecture on the differences and for the students to listen and take notes. This is a teaching-centred strategy. An alternative way is for the students to be

provided with authentic texts in which 'be going to' and 'will' are used to express the future meaning. By reading the texts and doing the tasks related to the texts, students realise the differences between the two forms for themselves. This is a learning-centred strategy.

11. meaning-focused: The opposite is form-focused. 'Meaning-focused' refers to the 'interest' (e.g., attention) being in content, not in form. If a task is meaning-focused, the interest lies in meaning/content rather than on form/structure.

12. meaningful: Meaningfulness refers to the nature of the task/activity and the way of doing it. If a task is meaningful, it may stimulate students to make good use of their personal knowledge and to seek the information they lack; it also encourages them to pay more attention to meaning in context rather than to form in isolation.

13. motivating: 'Motivating' usually refers to the doing of the task/activity. If a task is motivating, it arouses learners' interest and curiosity. If a task is not challenging, it is often de-motivating. Activities reflecting the situations in which learners will be engaged later is intrinsically motivating.

14. personalised: 'Personalised' refers to the involvement of the person who carries out a task/activity and the doing of it. If a task is personalised, its completion requires the use of personal ideas, opinions,

preferences, experiences, etc. Generally speaking, personalised tasks/exercises are intrinsically more meaningful, interesting and motivating than manipulative ones.

15. task-based: 'Task-based' is applicable to the design of teaching materials, or the classroom activity. It assumes that students can learn the language by doing tasks related to language. Learning activities can be task-based or exercise-based. An example of a task-based activity is, if a student is given a letter with the instruction which reads 'Imagine that you are the addressee of the letter. Read the letter and then write a reply'. That is, the student is required to carry out a task -- to write a reply. On the other hand, if the student is given a letter and is required to change active sentences into passive, then the activity is exercise-based, not communicatively task-based.

#### B. Exercises

Please look at the following exercises and see how many features each exercise has. Then fill in the form in C.

=====

### Exercise 1

A famous American actress, Mary Brown, is coming to visit our university soon. You'll have a chance to ask her 7 to 10 questions. Write down the questions that you'd like to ask.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Now compare your questions with those of your partner's and decide which questions are more important than others.

=====

### Exercise 2

Ask Wh-questions to which the following statements are answers (the key words in each answer are underlined).

1. The post office is in the grey building.
2. It's Kitty's turn to speak.
3. The train is due to arrive at seven thirty.
4. My uncle is a rather queer little old man.
5. He comes from a bourgeois family.
6. Today is Thursday.
7. I am thinking of going to the city this afternoon.
8. I plan to go to Soochow for a visit tomorrow.
9. The flowers we found there were blue.

=====

### Exercise 3

Li Li ( 李力 ), a Chinese film journalist, is going to interview an American actress, Mary Brown. Before he goes to meet her, he has prepared the following notes:

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 新电影名 ( Title of new film? ) | 6. 制片厂 ( Studio? )           |
| 2. 她的角色 ( Her part in it? )    | 7. 导演 ( Director(s)? )       |
| 3. 她的搭档 ( Her co-star? )       | 8. 发放日期 ( Date of release? ) |
| 4. 他的角色 ( His part? )          | 9. 所花经费 ( Cost of film? )    |
| 5. 多少个主要演员 ( No. of actors? )  |                              |

Imagine that you are the interpreter and you'll have to ask the questions for Li Li. Now write down the questions that you'll ask Mary Brown during the interview.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

.....

=====

#### Exercise 4

Read the following sentences and then answer the questions.

Mary was annoyed	that Tom had broken her cup.
Miss Lee looked disappointed	that she hadn't been invited.
Joe felt very sad	that he had failed in the exam.
Louise felt ashamed	that she had made so many mistakes.

- 1) Why was Mary annoyed?
- 2) Why did Miss Lee look disappointed?
- 3) Why did Joe feel very sad?
- 4) Why did Louise feel ashamed?

=====

#### Exercise 5

A British journalist is coming to interview you about your studies at the university. The following are some of the questions that he may ask. Think about them and give your reasons.

1. Why did you come to study English in this institute?
2. Why didn't you go to study in Beijing University?
3. Why do you want to study English?
4. Do you think English is difficult to learn? Why?

Now ask your neighbour the above questions and write down the reasons he gives.

=====

## Exercise 6

Work in groups. Express your opinion about each of the activities in the list below. The following are some examples:

1. I think learning Russian is difficult.
2. Well, I think learning Japanese is more/less difficult than learning English.
3. But I think learning German is the most/least difficult of all the activities.
4. In my opinion, learning French is as difficult as learning English.

Activities

learning French  
reading poems  
watching television  
play the piano  
stamp collecting  
mountain climbing  
skiing  
fishing  
sewing  
swimming

Useful adjectives

exciting  
easy  
dull  
interesting  
safe  
dangerous  
rewarding

## Exercise 7

Complete the following sentences by using the positive, comparative or superlative of the adjective in brackets:

1. He looked as \_\_\_\_\_ a brick wall. (nervous)
2. His new book's much \_\_\_\_\_ than his last. (interesting)
3. You're \_\_\_\_\_ person I've met. (annoying)
4. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ of the four girls in the family. (nice)
5. Mont Blanc is \_\_\_\_\_ all other Alpine peaks. (high)
6. I like Betty and Maud, but I think Betty's \_\_\_\_\_ of the two. (nice)
7. You're far \_\_\_\_\_ I am. (tolerant)
8. Is your mother any \_\_\_\_\_ ? (relaxed)
9. She's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Smith girls. (sensible)

## C. The Coding Form

If you think that an exercise has a certain communicative feature, please put a tick (v); if it does not have the feature, please put a cross (x); if you are not sure, put a question mark (?).

Exercises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Features							
appropriate							
authentic							
challenging							
choice-free							
contextualised							
creative							
goal-directed							
integrative							
interesting							
learning-centred							
meaning-focused							
meaningful							
motivating							
personalised							
task-based							

Coding symbol: v = yes, ? = maybe, x = no

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

## Appendix 6: A Provisional CEGCCL Syllabus

-----  
Notes:

(1) This course syllabus is provisional in that it has not been evaluated or examined by specialists in the light of underlying assumptions about both the theoretical underpinnings and the design and procedure of the proposed course.

(2) The selection and gradation of items in this syllabus are based mainly on CNESSTE (1989), Sinclair et al (1990), Zhang et al (1981-3), and the CECL core course books.

(3) As there is no general agreement about the numbers of notions and functions in English, the general framework of the present syllabus is adapted from Collins COBUILD English Grammar (Sinclair et al 1990), a reference grammar, which organises grammatical forms under ten broad functional headings.

(4) The grammatical forms in the ten functional headings will be dealt with in 34 units, each of which is expected to occupy two class hours.

(5) Unit 1 is a 'warm-up' introduction, which is intended to lead the class into a communicative grammar class. Unit 2 is about the basic structures of grammar. The other units are concerned with the ten functional areas respectively:

1. Referring to people and things: Units 3 and 4



2. Giving information about people and things:  
Units 5 to 7
  3. Making a message: Units 8 and 9
  4. Varying the message: Units 10 and 11
  5. Expressing time: Units 12 to 17
  6. Expressing manner and place: Unit 18
  7. Reporting what people say and think: Units 19  
and 20
  8. Combining messages: Units 21 to 26
  9. Making texts: Units 27 to 29
  10. Giving and processing information: Units 30  
to 36
- 

#### Unit 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Grammar and language learning
- 1.2 Form, meaning, and use
- 1.3 About the course, the course book and the  
reference book
- 1.4 A questionnaire

#### Unit 2: The structure of grammar

- 2.1 A hierarchy  
morpheme --> word --> phrase --> clause -->  
sentence --> discourse.
- 2.2 Basic sentence patterns  
SVC, SV, SVA, SVO, SVoO, SVOC, SVOA.
- 2.3 Types of sentence

a functional classification; a structural classification.

### Unit 3: People and things

#### 3.1 Identifying people and things: Nouns

count nouns, mass nouns, singular nouns, plural nouns, collective nouns, proper nouns, compound nouns.

#### 3.2 Referring to people and things without naming them: Pronouns

personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns.

#### 3.3 Indicating possession or close association:

Possessive structures

the apostrophe s ('s); the of-structure.

### Unit 4: Identification

#### 4.1 Identifying what you are talking about:

Determiners

articles -- the generic use, the specific use, the unique use; other determiners -- 'some', 'any', 'no', etc.

#### 4.2 The collocation of determiners

### Unit 5: Comparison

#### 5.1 Comparing persons, things and situations

the positive, the comparative, and the superlative degree of adjectives.

- 5.2 Giving information about manner, time and place  
the positive, the comparative, and the superlative degree of adverbs.

#### Unit 6: Numbers

- 6.1 Referring to an exact number of things: Numbers  
cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers.
- 6.2 Grammatical functions of numbers

#### Unit 7: Modification

- 7.1 Expanding the noun phrase  
nouns with prepositional phrases; nouns with adjectives; nouns with non-finite clauses.
- 7.2 Expanding the verb phrase  
types of adjuncts; different forms of adjuncts.

#### Unit 8: Transitivity

- 8.1 Indicating how many participants are involved:  
Transitivity  
types of verbs; intransitive verbs; transitive verbs.
- 8.2 Describing and identifying people and things:  
Complementation  
types of complementation; nouns as complements; adjectives as complements; infinitive (clause) as complements; -ing (clause) as complements;

-ed (clause) as complements.

Unit 9: The subject-complement clause

9.1 The use of subordinators

9.2 Types of subject-complement clause

Unit 10: Statements and questions

10.1 Statements, questions, orders, and suggestions  
types of sentence (the declarative, the  
interrogative, the imperative, the  
exclamatory).

10.2 Negation

negative words (e.g., not, never, no, nowhere,  
etc.); broad negatives (e.g., barely, hardly,  
seldom, etc.).

Unit 11: Modality

11.1 Using modals and semi-modals to express  
different meanings

prediction, possibility, ability, likelihood,  
permission, necessity, etc. (will, shall, can,  
may, must, have to, need, should, etc.).

11.2 Other modal words and phrases

probably, possibly, seem, be able to, etc.

Unit 12: The present time

12.1 The simple present tense

expressing habitual actions, universal truths,

present events and states; used in relative, object, conditional clauses.

12.2 The present progressive tense

expressing actions happening at the moment of speaking or at the present period of time; hypothetical meaning.

12.3 Lexical meaning of the verb and the progressive tense

Unit 13: The past time (1)

13.1 The simple past tense

expressing actions and states of definite past time, habitual past actions; hypothetical use.

13.1 The past progressive tense

expressing actions happening at past moments or as the background of other actions; hypothetical meaning.

Unit 14: The past time (2)

14.1 The present perfect tense

completeness and incompleteness; other uses (e.g., in structures such as 'it is the first time (that) ...' and in sentences which contains 'since-clause' (time).

14.2 The past perfect tense

completeness and incompleteness; expressing unrealised hopes, plans, intentions, etc.; hypothetical use.

## Unit 15: The past time (3)

## 15.1 The present perfect progressive tense

used to express actions which began in the past and are still continuing or have just completed.

## 15.2 The past perfect progressive tense

used to express actions which began in the past of the past and were still continuing or had just completed by the past moment (then).

## Unit 16: The future time

## 16.1 Ways to express future time

will, shall, the simple tense, will/shall + be + doing, will/shall + have + -ed, will/shall + have + been + doing, be going to, etc.

## 16.2 Future in the past

would/should, would/should + be + -ing, would/should + have + ed, would/should + have + been + -ing.

## 16.3 Special uses of some structures

'was/were going to' used to expressed unrealised plans; 'was/were to + have + -ed' used to expressed unobeyed orders or unperformed acts, etc.

## 16.4 Comparison of different expressions

e.g., will/shall and be going to; the simple present and the present progressive, etc.

## Unit 17: Adjuncts (time)

17.1 Emphasising the unexpected: continuing,  
stopping, or not happening

use of 'already', 'still', 'yet', 'up to now',  
etc.

17.2 Specific times and non-specific times

e.g., at two o'clock, last night, in 1956;  
about, almost, shortly after.

17.3 Frequency and duration

e.g., always, often, never, from time to time;  
for ever, long, permanently, for an hour.

## Unit 18: Adjuncts (manner and place)

18.1 Position of adjuncts

initial, medial, final -- difference in use.

18.2 Adverbs of manner

18.3 Adverbs of degree

18.4 Giving information about place

prepositional phrases; adverbs.

## Unit 19: The direct and indirect speech

19.1 Indicating that you are reporting  
types and use of reporting verbs.

19.2 Reporting someone's actual words  
the direct speech.

19.3 Reporting in your own words

reporting statements, thoughts, questions,  
orders, requests, advice, and intentions.



## 19.4 Time reference in the indirect speech

## Unit 20: The object clause

## 20.1 The use of subordinators

## 20.2 The position of the clause

the use of 'it' as formal object.

## 20.3 The omission of 'that'

## Unit 21: The adverbial clause (1)

## 21.1 Types of adverbial clause

## 21.2 Adverbial clause of time

## 21.3 Adverbial clause of place

## 21.4 Adverbial clause of reason

## 21.5 Adverbial clause of purpose

## Unit 22: The adverbial clause (2)

## 22.1 Adverbial clause of result

## 22.2 Adverbial clause of manner

## 22.3 Adverbial clause of condition

## 22.4 Adverbial clause of concession

## Unit 23: The relative clause

## 23.1 Types of relative clause: restrictive and non-restrictive.

## 23.2 Relative pronouns

relative pronouns in the restrictive and in the non-restrictive clause; relative pronouns with propositions.

Unit 24: The subject clause and the appositive clause

24.1 The subject clause

subordinators, positions, the use of 'it' as formal subject.

24.2 The appositive clause

types (restrictive and non-restrictive), positions.

Unit 25: Non-finite clauses

25.1 Types of non-finite clauses

infinitive clauses, -ing clauses, -ed clauses.

25.2 Transformation from finite clauses to non-finite clauses

Unit 26: Coordination

26.1 Linking words/phrases/clauses

26.2 Use of coordinators

26.3 Concord

Unit 27: References (1)

27.1 Referring back in a specific way

use of personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and determiners to refer to specific words/phrases in text.

27.2 Referring back in a general way

use of demonstrative pronouns, and 'general words' to refer to sentences or whole sections of spoken or written text.

## Unit 28: References (2)

## 28.1 Referring forward

use of words such as 'this', 'these',  
'following', 'next', 'below', etc.

## 28.2 Leaving out words: ellipsis

types of ellipsis; ellipsis in written texts  
and in conversation.

## Unit 29: Substitution

## 29.1 Types of substitution

nominal, verbal, clausal.

## 29.2 Other forms of substitution

## Unit 30: The passive voice

## 30.1 Focusing on the thing affected

## 30.2 Tenses in the passive

## 30.3 Types of verb and the passive

## 30.4 The use of the by-phrase

## Unit 31: The cleft sentence

## 31.1 Selecting focus

elements to be focused.

## 31.2 The cleft sentence and the relative clause

## Unit 32: The impersonal 'it'

## 32.1 Describing a place or situation

## 32.2 Talking about the weather and the time

## 32.3 Commenting on an action, activity, or

experience

- 32.4 Commenting on a fact that you are about to mention
- the formal 'it'.

Unit 33: The existential sentence

- 33.1 Introducing something new
- 33.2 The finite and the non-finite forms of the existential structure

Unit 34: Sentence adjuncts and conjuncts

- 34.1 Indicating your attitude to what you are saying and stating your field of reference -- sentence adjunct
- 34.2 Showing connections or indicating a change in the discourse -- conjunct

Unit 35: Fronting, postponement and inversion

- 35.1 Putting something first -- fronting
- 35.2 Postponement -- the end-weight and end-focus principles
- 35.3 Inversion

Unit 36: The tag question

- 36.1 Making a statement into a question
- 36.2 Structures of the tag question

**Appendix 7: Guidelines and Sample Materials**

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**Notes:**

(1) This appendix comprises (a) a general introduction to CEGCCL and (b) sample CEGCCL materials.

(2) The sample materials are intended to be part of (a) the Students' Book, (b) the Reference Book, and (c) the Teacher's Handbook. The materials in the Students' Book are for classroom use, while those in the Reference Book are for use by both the teacher and the students for consultation purposes; the materials in the Teacher's Handbook are for the teacher only. The Students' Book will be made up of 'units', whereas the Reference Book will consist of 'chapters'. In the sample materials, 'unit' is used to refer to sections in the Students' Book and 'chapter' to refer to the Reference Book. The sample unit/chapter in this appendix is designed as Unit/Chapter 5 of the proposed course book.

(3) There are four parts in this appendix:

1. A provisional general introduction to CEGCCL
  2. Unit 5: Comparison (Students' Book)
  3. Unit 5: Notes on 'Comparison' (Teacher's Book)
  4. Chapter 5: Comparison (Reference Book)
-

1. A Provisional General Introduction to CEGCCL  
(for the teacher)

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Note:

This introduction is organised to answer the following questions:

Who is this course for?

What is the nature of the course?

What are the underlying principles of the course?

What are the components of the course?

How many books are involved in the course?

How can this course be used?

What are the recommended readings for the teacher?

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Who is this course for?

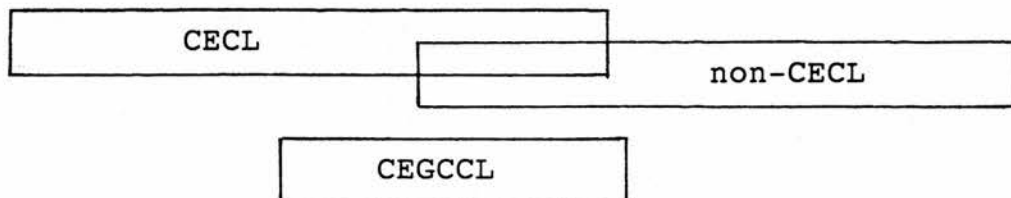
This course (Communicative English Grammar Course for Chinese Learners, henceforth CEGCCL) is designed to complement the CECL core course (i.e., Li et al 1987-1989, Communicative English for Chinese Learners). It is for second-year university English majors who have completed the first CECL core course.

What is the nature of the course?

The course is a remedial course, because the grammatical items treated in this course were dealt with in the secondary school English course. This course is

an example of teaching language for communication. If the CECL approach and a traditional approach (i.e., the non-communicative approach) were to be ranged on a continuum, the position of CEGCCL would be in the middle ground, as can be seen in the following diagram:

communicative —————+————— traditional



The CECL project is made up of the CECL core course (i.e., Li et al 1987-1989) and the supplementary CECL sub-courses: Grammar, Phonetics, Vocabulary, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Since CEGCCL is the Grammar sub-course, it is necessary to compare the CECL core course and this course. For convenience, the differences will be looked at under the following six headings: (a) aim and objectives, (b) views of language and language learning, (c) content and focus, (d) fluency and accuracy, (e) coordination and subordination, and (f) class time.

(1) Aim and objectives: The CECL core course aims to help students acquire communicative competence; although CEGCCL shares the same aim, it is more concerned with specific objectives (see Page 567 below).

(2) Views of language and language learning: The basic views of language and language learning adopted by the CECL core course are that language is communication

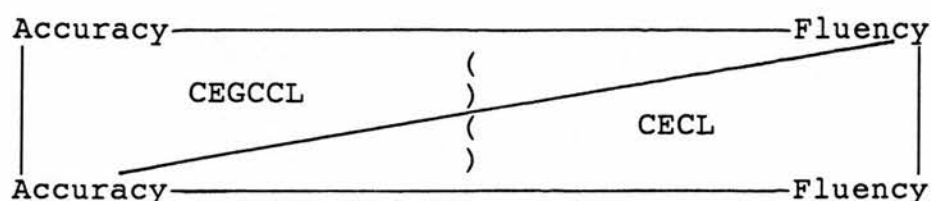
and that learning a language is learning to communicate. CEGCCL, by contrast, takes a functional view of language and a skill-development model of learning. CEGCCL recognises the importance of the mastery of linguistic structures needed for communication. That is to say, for CEGCCL, teaching for communication means teaching students not only to do things through language but also to master the language forms necessary for communication. CEGCCL also assumes that learning the structures necessary for communication is an important part of the process of learning to communicate.

(3) Content and focus: As an integrative EGP (English for General Purposes) course, the CECL core course aims to help students develop different language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.). By contrast, CEGCCL is a grammar-specific 'discrete' course; it focuses mainly on communicative use of the structural items of the target language. Although language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing will be involved in the implementation of the course, these skills are not the focus of the grammar course.

(4) Fluency and accuracy: As fluency and accuracy are two extremes on a continuum, it can be seen that the CECL core course is intended to be a fluency-based course while CEGCCL is designed as an accuracy-based one. If fluency and accuracy are at the two extremes of the four sides of a rectangle, then CECL is fluency-oriented



whereas CEGCCL is accuracy-oriented:



(5) Coordination and subordination: Both CECL and CEGCCL are intended to help students to learn to use the language for communication. In this sense, they are two different courses aiming at different aspects of the learning/teaching process. However, CEGCCL is designed to supplement the CECL core course, or to make up for what is not covered in the CECL core course, which means that CEGCCL is subordinate to CECL.

(6) Class time: The CECL core course is designed for use in the first two years of the four-year English major programme of studies at the university and it occupies seven to eight class hours a week, whereas CEGCCL is designed for the second-year students only and it takes two class hours a week in the two terms.

What are the underlying principles of the course?

There are three general principles underlying the design of CEGCCL: (a) learning-centred, (b) task-based, and (c) grammar-specific.

**(1) The learning-centred principle**

Learning-centredness is mainly concerned with the

'design' and 'procedure' components (see Pages 567-577 below). Learning-centredness assumes that language is best learned by the learner's active engagement in doing tasks/activities when his attention is focused on meaning. Learning-centredness is based on the understanding that teaching does not necessarily lead to learning and that teaching should facilitate learning. The idea of learning-centredness can be used and incorporated in the development of instructional materials and the employment of classroom techniques and strategies. However, it does not deny the role of the teacher, nor does it necessarily suggest negotiation between the teacher (course designer, materials writer) and the learner about elements such as aims, objectives, syllabus types, task/activity types, although the learner's needs, desires, wishes and expectations are taken into consideration when decisions are being made; its aim is not to achieve learner autonomy, because it is believed that the role of the teacher is essential in the learning process and because (formal) education is not possible if the teacher is seen as unnecessary. Learning-centredness does not determine the decision-making process although it affects/influences it.

The different elements in the design component can be taken into consideration with regard to this principle. The objective, for example, is in accordance with the assumption that skills and knowledge are taught because learners wish to utilise them for some purpose

beyond the learning environment itself. The choice of syllabus is related to factors such as who the learners are, why they need to learn English, what they need to learn, where their difficulties lie and what learning has taken (or is taking) place. The choice of types of learning and teaching tasks and activities and their development are also affected by this principle.

In the development of instructional materials and the description/explanation of linguistic (usage) and pragmatic (use) rules, attention was paid to the learner's sociocultural and educational background. The choice of language forms, the size and density of the texts used, the content and format of the texts, and the way of presenting rules are all related to learner factors.

Learning-centredness is realised in many ways in the classroom. In communication-oriented activities, learners are communicators rather than bystanders. Their readiness and motivation are very important in performing the classroom task/activity. The learners play an active role in communicative tasks and activities in the classroom, instead of sitting silently and listening to the teacher explaining rules. Very often they work either on their own or with one another to find out grammatical facts, and are expected to discover rules rather than to be given them. The teacher should consider the students' learning pace and learning styles, and recognise learners' differences. The teacher's

classroom techniques and strategies should be aimed at both the facilitation of interaction and development of the learners' communicative skills.

(2) The task-based principle

The use of a variety of different types of task in the learning process makes learning more interactive and communicative, since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. This principle is in accordance with a communicative view of language and the theory of language learning underlying CLT. As one of the objectives of CEGCCL is to provide students with opportunities to use the forms in meaningful, meaning-focused activities, the design of learning tasks/activities and the roles of the teacher and learners as well as the role of the instructional material should help to achieve this objective. This principle is a useful guideline in the selection and gradation of the language input in the course.

According to this principle any linguistic description/explanation in the instructional materials should be as meaning-focused and contextualised as possible. Explanation is often made available through tasks -- instead of giving the rule to the learners we can so design tasks that by doing them learners can discover it themselves.

In order to ensure that students are learning to use

the language rather than learning about the language, the classroom procedures should aim at the development of learners' communicative skills. Teachers' use of classroom techniques and strategies should facilitate learners' performance of tasks. Very often, students are required not to do mechanical drills, but to use English to carry out tasks.

### (3) The grammar-specific principle

Considering the nature of language learning and that of the grammar course, this principle is essential in the design of the course. As we know, the teaching and learning of grammar cannot to be totally choice-free, integrative, and/or meaning-focused. This suggests the importance of the grammar-specific principle in the design of CEGCCL. It is this principle that ensures the course is grammar-based. This is the main principle that distinguishes CEGCCL from CECL.

As the main objective of CEGCCL is to offer review and remedy, some of the tasks/activities need to be form-focused. In the selection of teaching content, this principle is the main criterion. It also determines the selection and gradation of many language items. Under this principle decontextualised and form-focused activities are also expected in the description and the task. Sometimes the focus of the description and that of the task may be on usage and discrete grammar points.

According to this principle, classroom practice can

sometimes be structural rather than communicative, mechanical rather than interactive. Both communicative and non-communicative tasks/activities are of great importance in classroom learning. Some of the practice materials may be accuracy-based and form-focused.

#### (4) Relationships between the three principles

As CEGCCL is a grammar-based course, both communicative (i.e., learning-centred, task-based) and structural (i.e., grammar-specific) principles are relevant in the design, implementation and evaluation. Although the three principles may not always harmonise and may even be in conflict in certain aspects, in practice they function at different times and levels. In a communication-based course, it is not abnormal to integrate the grammatical and the communicative features, because one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it takes into account both functional and structural aspects of language. It is possible to integrate the communicative and the grammatical aspects in the same course because although it is difficult or impossible to deal with them successfully at one and the same time they can be integrated by a constant change of focus: when one is brought into prominence, the other temporarily blurs into the background. Therefore, although the three general principles of CEGCCL are seemingly contradictory, they are in fact in harmony with each other -- the three of

them form the basis of a course which is not only communication-based but also grammar-based. That is the main feature of CEGCCL.

What are the components of the course?

There are four essential inter-related components in the course: (a) theoretical assumptions about language and learning, (b) design, (c) procedure, and (d) evaluation.

### 1. Theoretical assumptions

The theory of language underlying the course is the functional view, which assumes that language is a tool for communication. The view of learning, on the other hand, is that learning a language is learning how to use it, which is concerned with the development of a set of skills. The learning model, therefore, is a skill-learning one.

### 2. Design

The design component is concerned with the objectives, the syllabus, the learning and teaching tasks and activities, the roles of learners and teachers, and the role of instructional materials.

#### (1) Objectives

The chief objectives of the course are to help students review and 'activate' the grammatical items they



have studied and to remedy their grammatical weaknesses, to highlight the communicative functions of the grammatical forms, and to provide students with opportunities to use forms, which they have already studied, in meaningful, task-based activities.

By the end of the course, students should have a systematic knowledge of basic grammar and be able to use forms covered in the course efficiently and correctly in expressing communicative functions in real-life situations. Therefore, the focus of the course is on the remediation of grammatical inaccuracy on the one hand and on the use of the forms to express communicative functions on the other. It is hoped that the course will not only consolidate students' knowledge of the language system and their use of the code, but also foster their ability to use the code efficiently and appropriately in communicative encounters.

## (2) The syllabus

Broadly speaking, the syllabus is a functional one, because 34 out of the 36 units are organised under 10 functional areas:

1. Referring to people and things: Units 3 and 4
2. Giving information about people and things:  
Units 5 to 7
3. Making a message: Units 8 and 9
4. Varying the message: Units 10 and 11
5. Expressing time: Units 12 to 17



6. Expressing manner and place: Unit 18
7. Reporting what people say and think: Units 19 and 20
8. Combining messages: Units 21 to 26
9. Making texts: Units 27 to 29
10. Giving and processing information: Units 30 to 36

Unit 1 is a 'warm-up' introduction, which is intended to lead the students into a communicative grammar class; Unit 2 is about the basic structures of English grammar.

### (3) Tasks

#### (a) Task kinds

There are two main kinds of task in language teaching: 'pedagogic tasks' and 'real-world tasks'. With real-world tasks learners are required to approximate, in class, to the sorts of behaviours required of them in real-life communication; pedagogic tasks, by contrast, require learners to do things which are not likely to be done outside the classroom. However, it is often difficult to distinguish these two kinds of task in practice. Real-world tasks are justified on the grounds that they are enabling learners to rehearse real-world behaviours, whereas the justification for pedagogic tasks is that this kind of task helps learners to develop the prerequisite skills for using the target language (e.g., in the case of pattern drills, the necessary fluency and

mastery over structural and phonological patterns in the language) in real-life communication.

We can, on the other hand, distinguish between communicative and non-communicative tasks. A communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in using the target language to comprehend, manipulate, produce or interact while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than on form. By contrast, a non-communicative task is a piece of classroom work which requires learners to practise the target language while their attention is basically focused on form rather than on meaning. It should be pointed out that although real-world tasks are often communicative, it does not mean that they are identical with communicative tasks, because some communicative tasks engage learners in activities which are unlikely to occur outside the classroom and have little real-world relevance although they are nevertheless intellectually valid and meaning-focused. It should also be noted that the distinction between real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks on the one hand and between communicative tasks and non-communicative tasks on the other hand is not hard and fast; therefore, it is better to regard it as a continuum.

#### (b) Elements of a Task

There are six elements in a task: (a) goal, (b) input, (c) activity, (d) teacher role, (e) learner role,

and (f) settings.

'Goals' are the intentions behind the task; that is, a particular task has a particular goal. Any task has one or more goals, either implicit or explicit. For example, the goal for doing pattern drills may be habit formation, or it may be a preparation for another task, whereas the goal for role-plays may be to provide learners with opportunities to use language in communicative encounters. The relationship between goals and tasks is not one-to-one. A task may have two or more goals while it is possible for many tasks to share the same goal. Besides, the goal of a task may be short-term or long-term, although the former usually serves the latter.

'Input' is the data that form the point of departure for the task. Input can be verbal (e.g., a text) or non-verbal (e.g., a picture); if verbal, it can be written (e.g., a text) or spoken (e.g., a recording). The type and amount of input in a course usually depend on the theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and learning, the aims and objectives of the course, the type of learners, the nature and the length of the course, among other things.

'Activity' specifies what the learner will do with the input. There are basically two types of activities in this course -- the practice activity and the transfer activity; they are designed to focus on grammatical forms and/or to practise using the target language in

communicative encounters.

The practice activity: Form-focused activities such as pattern drills, gap-fillings, transformations, which are aimed at practising language forms, are practice activities. This type of activity helps learners to develop the prerequisite skills for later use in real-world communication. The justification for this type of activity is that the practice is a kind of 'investment' and that it helps learners to extend their stock of latent language.

The transfer activity: Meaning-focused activities such as problem-solving, information-transfer, discussion are transfer activities, which are sometimes called free practice activities. This type of activity requires students to transfer the forms they have learned into use. In this type of activity, learners are expected to apply their newly acquired mastery of linguistic forms to the comprehension and production of communicative language and it is through this type of activity that learners rehearse or approximate to behaviours which are similar to or the same as those in the real-world communication.

'Role' refers to the part that the teacher and the learner will play in carrying out the task. Different tasks also require different roles of the participants. Learner roles and teacher' roles in a task are closely related. Giving the learner a certain role requires the teacher to adopt a different role as the two roles are

complementary.

'Settings' refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task and the consideration of how the task is to be carried out. Individual work, pair-work, group-work, and whole-class work are usual settings in the classroom.

### (c) Task types

There are four types of task in CEGCCL: (a) pre-tasks; (b) form-focused tasks; (c) meaning-focused tasks; (d) use-based tasks. Generally speaking, pre-tasks and meaning-focused tasks can be real-world or pedagogic tasks, form-focused tasks are usually pedagogic tasks, and use-based tasks are often real-world tasks.

Pre-tasks are for warm-up purposes. The main aims of the task are: (a) to let students 'review' what they have previously studied; (b) to elicit from students the relevant information about the language form to be focused on and practised; (c) to give the teacher a chance to see what students already know and are able to do (and what they do not know and/or are unable to do), so that he can adjust the amount of explanation and feedback and/or change his teaching plan; or (d) to arouse students' interest and curiosity.

Form-focused tasks aim at developing learners' mastery of the forms necessary for communication. In this type of task, learners are required to display their control over the forms of the language rather than their

ability to use the language in communication. Most traditional exercises share this aim.

Meaning-focused tasks emphasise meaning rather than form. When students are doing the task, their attention is directed to and focused on meaning, not form.

Use-based tasks are those which provide students with opportunities to use the target language in communication. The language that learners will use is in no way predetermined. In other words, they can use whatever language they want to use in order to get meanings across, although some forms are more likely to be used than others. This type of task aims at replicating features of communication in real-world situations.

#### (4) Roles of teachers and learners

The roles of teachers and learners within a task were discussed in the previous section; 'role' in the task is used in its narrow sense. 'Role' also has a broad sense, in which case it is a major factor in the curriculum. The successful implementation of any educational programme, to a great extent, depends on this factor. Teacher roles are related to the following issues: (a) the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil; (b) the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place; (c) the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught; and (d) the interactional patterns that

develop between teachers and learners. The teacher roles are also related to assumptions about the nature of language and learning and other elements in the design and procedure components. There are many possible roles for you in this course, e.g., facilitator (of communication process), process manager, participant, guide, organiser, controller, assessor, model, resource, and teacher.

Learner roles vary according to the different assumptions about language and learning, different teaching methods and approaches, different teaching techniques and strategies, different teacher understandings of language learning, and different tasks/activities, among other things. It is often believed that the typical learner roles in CLT are: negotiator and interactor, or participant. However, it must be remembered that in any teaching situation learners always have the inherent 'learner' role.

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for there to be a mismatch between the role perception of the teacher and the learner. For example, some Chinese students may like teachers to act as 'knowledge-providers', 'organisers', and/or 'models' rather than facilitators, participants, and/or guides.

As can be seen from the Students' Book, some of the roles of the teacher and learners expressed or implied in CEGCCL will be different from those in the traditional classroom.



### (5) The role of the material

The role of teaching materials, to a large extent, reflects decisions concerning (a) their primary goal, (b) their form, (c) their relation to other sources of input, and (d) the abilities of teachers. The primary goal of CEGCCL materials is to present grammatical content, to practise content, to facilitate communication between learners and between the teacher and learners. The form of the materials is a textbook, which is the major input in the classroom, and a reference book. The classroom teaching materials consist of different kinds/types of task which the learners can use to develop their communication skills.

### 3. Procedure

Procedure covers classroom techniques, strategies and practices; it focuses on the presentation, practice, and feedback phases of moment-to-moment classroom teaching. At the level of procedure there are three dimensions: (a) the use of learning tasks/activities to present language and to clarify and demonstrate formal, communicative, or other aspects of the target language, (b) the ways in which particular teaching tasks/activities are used for practising language, and (c) the strategies and techniques used in giving feedback to learners' production in terms of form and content.

The procedure in CEGCCL is process-oriented in that the techniques and strategies of presentation of



language, facilitation of practice, and feedback-giving are idiosyncratic in nature. That is, you, the teacher, can and will decide which technique/strategy is best and most appropriate in your class according to the particular teaching context. This means that classroom teaching methodology is dynamic, and participant(teacher/learner)-oriented.

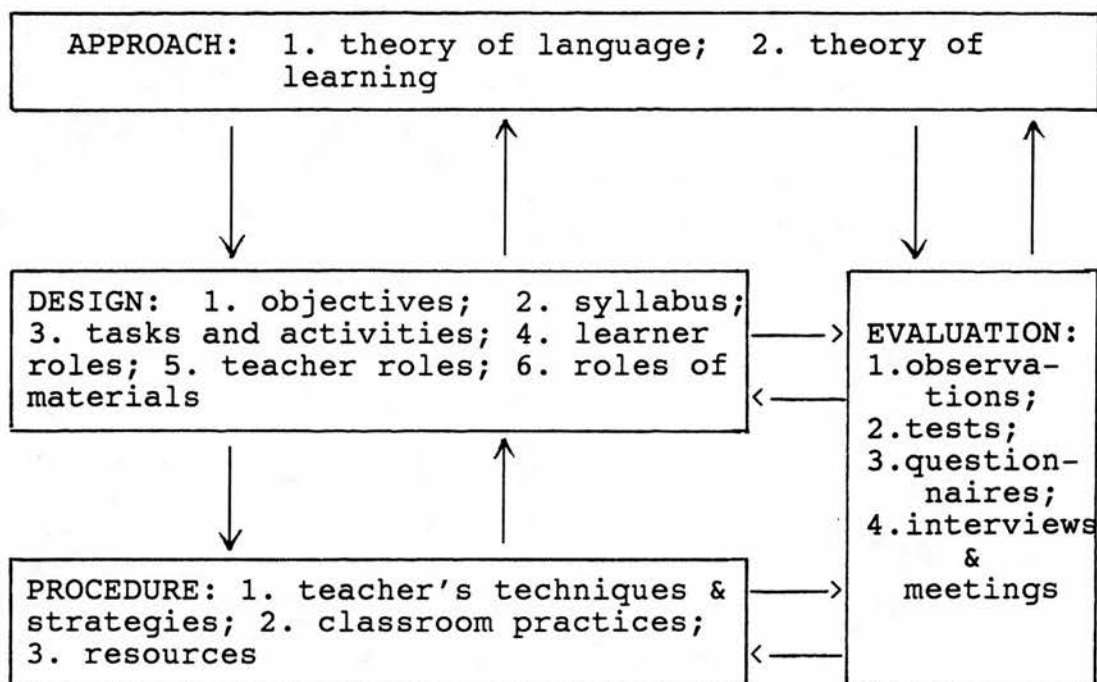
#### 4. Evaluation

Although evaluation in CEGCCL is underpinned by the component of theoretical assumptions about the nature of language and of learning, it is concerned more with the other two components (i.e., design and procedure); for example, whether the objectives are attained, whether the syllabus type, the type of tasks/activities, the roles of the teacher and learners, and the classroom techniques and strategies, etc. will facilitate the learning/acquisition and development of learners' communication skills are questions that are of most interest in the evaluation process. The measures of evaluation of CEGCCL are: (a) classroom observations, (b) tests, (c) questionnaires, and (d) interviews and meetings.

#### 5. Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, the four components described above are inter-related and they together form a composite whole. The component concerning the theory of language and the theory of learning serves as a basis for the other three

components, which in turn reflect the theoretical assumptions. The relationship between the components and their elements can be illustrated as follows:



How many books are involved in the course?

CEGCCL involves the use of three books: (a) the Students' Book, (b) the Reference Book, and (c) the Teacher's Handbook. The Students Book is for classroom use and it is designed to be worked through, section by section, unit by unit. The Reference Book is for use outside the class, and its main purpose is to complement the Students' Book. Both the Students' Book and the Reference Book are for students as well as for the teacher. The Teacher's Handbook is for the teacher only.

#### (1) The Students' Book

The Students' Book is made up of 36 units, each of

which is designed to last about 2 class hours. However, as the teaching pace varies from class to class owing to factors such as the level of the learners, the size of the class, the students' learning styles and the competence of the teacher, it is up to you, the classroom teacher, to decide whether to leave out certain parts of a unit (or even the whole unit) or to provide supplementary materials for certain unit(s).

The Students' Book consists of two strands: the description and the task. The description is not only knowledge-based but also communication-oriented. That is, it offers students necessary grammatical facts for communication and at the same time helps them to get ready to activate and use the forms to communicate. The task strand provides students with different kinds/types of task. Some tasks are for practice purposes and others for transfer purposes. Some tasks will be designed to help students review what they have studied; others are intended to provide students with opportunities to use the target language communicatively in the classroom.

## (2) The Reference Book

As the class time for the grammar course is rather limited and as the focus of classroom teaching is on students' practice and use of the forms, it is necessary for learners to consult a reference book outside class when they feel the need. The Reference Book is designed to complement the Students' Book. The coverage of

content in the Reference Book is wider than that in the Students' Book. It includes information on (a) the grammatical facts, (b) the grammatical concepts, and (c) the relationships between form, meaning, and use.

### (3) The Teacher's Handbook

The Teacher's Book is designed (a) to describe the goals and aims of the teaching/learning tasks/activities; (b) to provide some suggested procedures for conducting the lesson; (c) to offer suggested answer(s)/solution(s) to the activity in the task; and (d) to remind the teacher of some methodological issues. It is important that teachers are encouraged to adapt what has been suggested in the Handbook because what is recommended is a dynamic, participant-oriented teaching methodology, which means that you, the teacher, is expected to adopt and/or adapt any teaching techniques/strategies according to the particular teaching context. Therefore, many of the decisions (e.g., the deletion or addition of the classroom teaching materials, the roles of the teacher and learners) are to be made by you, the classroom teacher, because you are the person who knows the students (their needs, interest, language proficiency, and learning styles, among other things) best.

The format of the Teacher's Handbook will be as follows: (1) Introduction to the unit and the structure(s) being highlighted. (2) Tasks: their goals, focus, suggested procedures, suggested answers, and other

information (e.g., if the input is from the CECL core course, it is stated clearly because the teacher may want to look at the relevant part or unit in the CECL core course in order to conduct the lesson better).

How can this course be used?

(1) The organisation of the units

As was pointed out earlier, there are 36 units in the Students' Book, each of which is designed to cover two class hours. The Students' Book is intended to be used in the two terms (72 hours) of the second year in a four-year university programme. Generally speaking, four hours must be set aside for the end-of-term reviews/examinations. Therefore, there are, in fact, two extra units in the Students' Book, which are intentionally included at your disposal because class pace differs from one to another. If a unit is not enough for two class hours, you, the teacher, are encouraged to provide supplementary materials, in which case the two extra units may be useful. On the other hand, if a unit is too much for two class hours, you are expected to skip some sections in a unit or whole units which are less useful or too easy for your students.

Although it is not clearly stated in the course books, you are expected to do follow-up procedures. For example, at the beginning of each lesson, it may be useful to review what was learned in the previous lesson

and/or to check students' homework if any. Before the end of the lesson, give your students opportunities to ask questions and/or assign some homework.

(2) The organisation of a lesson

There are different ways and strategies for the teaching of grammar. The following suggested general framework consists of four stages (i.e., warm-up, focus, practice, and follow-up) for the teaching and learning of a grammar item, each stage consisting of four elements (purpose, input, procedure, task category).

(i) Stage 1: Warm-up

(a) Purpose

There are two main purposes for this stage: (a) to make the learning of a certain grammar point meaningful and communicatively relevant and to stimulate students' curiosity and arouse their learning interest, (b) to give you, the classroom teacher, some idea of what the students are already able to do/say about a certain subject by using certain grammatical forms so that you can 'adapt' the teaching plan/content/materials in order to focus the lesson on unfamiliar items.

(b) Input

The input at this stage is activities, which involve the use of pictures, cartoons, diagrams, and/or

questions. The input may be related to what the students have studied in the previous lesson(s) (or in the CECL core course) or what they are going to learn in the lesson.

(c) Procedure

Students are asked to do the activity either individually or in pairs/groups (or even with the whole class as one). If the activity is not whole-class work, you, the teacher, may first observe the class activity and later bring the class together; students then report their findings, problems, or opinions. Then you move the focus to and introduce the main points of the lesson.

(d) Task category

As pre-tasks are designed for warm-up purposes, tasks involved at this stage are mainly pre-tasks.

(ii) Stage 2: Focus

(a) Purpose

The purposes of this stage are: (a) to focus on the structure(s) that is/are to be highlighted, (b) to provide enough examples of the highlighted structure(s), (c) to clarify any problems concerning the structure(s).

(b) Input

The input may be groups of sentences, or a self-

contained text which exemplifies the structure(s) to be focused. If the input is a group of sentences, the purpose may be rule-discovering/-exemplifying or comparing; if the input is a text, the focus may be on how certain structures are used in communication.

(c) Procedure

You may want to present the structure(s) to the learners or clarify some points. Or you may want to ask students to do tasks which may be overtly or covertly structure-oriented -- e.g., to work out rules, to recognise differences between certain structures, to answer questions related to the text, to solve problems. Different tasks may require different procedures and classroom groupings. Your role changes according to the nature and the stage of the task/activity.

(d) Task category

Tasks involved at this stage are normally form-focused and meaning-focused tasks.

(iii) Stage 3: Practice

(a) Purpose

The purposes are: (a) to give students opportunities to use (i.e., to practise using and/or to communicate by using) the structures to which they have been exposed and/or which they have studied in both



controlled and free practice, (b) to see how well the students can use the new structure(s) in their production (which will help you to adapt your teaching plan in Stage 4.).

(b) Input

The input at this stage is mainly tasks and activities, which involve the use of pictures, cartoons, diagrams, texts, and/or questions. Some tasks/activities will lead to controlled practice, others to free practice. Students are required to perform the tasks according to the facts given, or by using their knowledge, skills, and personal experiences.

(c) Procedure

Students use English to convey/demand information (e.g., to exchange ideas, to ask for/give information, to express personal preferences, etc.). They may work individually, in pairs, in groups, or even as one big group. You are there to guide/facilitate the activities. Different tasks and activities require different procedures.

(d) Task category

Tasks involved at this stage are form-focused, meaning-focused and use-based tasks.

(iv) Stage 4: Follow-up

Generally speaking, this is the final stage and is usually teacher-controlled. You may want to ask for clarification or for details from individuals/pairs/groups; you may ask students what answers they gave or what conclusions they came to; you may summarise the main points dealt with during the lesson and highlight them; you may give explanations of certain language points; you may advise students to consult reference books and/or dictionaries; or you may assign tasks as homework to the students. Although this is the last stage, it does not mean that it only happens at the end of the lesson. In fact this stage can happen at any point once the lesson starts.

Still another point is that the follow-up stage is not incorporated in the instructional materials. As was pointed out in the preceding paragraph, this stage can take place at any point of the lesson so long as you, the teacher, feel it is appropriate. This is a reflection of the assumption that the CEGCCL methodology is dynamic in that you, the classroom teacher, are expected to manage the class and to adapt the teaching materials to the actual teaching situation.

The four stages suggested above are similar or closely related to the learning task types discussed earlier. However, they are not identical (e.g., there is no similar task type to match the Follow-up Stage).

### (3) The preparation for a lesson

There are different ways for you to prepare for a lesson. In the Teacher's Handbook, the following types of information are available: (a) the description of goals of learning tasks/activities, (b) suggested procedures for conducting a lesson (or part of a lesson), (c) suggested answers/solutions to tasks/activities/problems, and (d) methodological issues. These different types of information may be helpful for the preparation. The following are useful pieces of advice:

a. Read this general introduction carefully at an early stage in your teaching;

b. Read as many of the recommended readings (see Pages 591-92) as possible so that you will be familiar with the communicative approach;

c. Read through each unit and do the tasks yourself before you teach the lesson;

d. Look at the lesson notes in the Teacher's Handbook;

e. Consult the Reference Book when necessary;

f. Think about your own class and see whether there is any need to make changes (e.g., adaptation of teaching materials, task requirements, input, procedures, settings, etc.).

g. Remember that you know your class better than anyone else. Therefore, you are encouraged to make any changes so long as they can help you to achieve the course objectives.

#### (4) Some general methodological issues

The major dilemma which communicative methodology has given rise to is the issue of control versus freedom. The more control the teacher imposes on the learner, the less freedom the learner has. In the present case, the more control imposed on the teaching procedure, the less freedom you, the classroom teacher, will have in the teaching process. Therefore, what seems more sensible is not to tell you what to do, but to help you realise the nature of the teaching methodology. As the methodological distinctions between real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks on the one hand and between transfer and practice activities on the other were made in earlier discussions, this section will focus on some other methodological issues.

##### (1) Mistake/error correction

One of the characteristics of the traditional approach is to prevent learners from making mistakes, whereas in CLT, mistakes/errors are seen as a natural and healthy phenomenon. It seems that neither view of mistakes/errors should be adopted without caution. The view adopted in this course is that if the mistake/error hampers information exchange and the communication process it must be corrected. Also, if the mistake/error is concerned with the structure being practised/ highlighted in the lesson, it should also be corrected in one way or another (because there are many ways to

correct learners' mistakes/errors). However, it is you, the teacher, who will decide what to do with the mistake/error since you know the teaching context best. It is also up to you to decide when and how to correct learners' mistakes/errors, if you think it necessary to correct them. If you think it is appropriate for your students to correct each other's mistakes/errors, you can encourage them to do so.

## (2) Inductive versus deductive

Although both inductive and deductive learning were incorporated in the design of the course materials, again, it is you, the teacher, who is expected to choose one of them or other ways (e.g., guided-discovery) according to the particular teaching context. For example, in the first phase of Task 1 in Unit 5 (Students' Book) it is inductive learning that is intended. However, you can adopt the deductive way simply by telling students that the girl is comparing her father with the boy's father. Or you can guide the students to discover the 'rule' by asking them with whom or with whose father the girl is comparing her father.

## (3) Accuracy versus fluency

As indicated earlier, there are different kinds/types of task in CEGCCL. Some of the tasks are designed to promote accuracy, others fluency. However, you can change the focus of a task. For example, Task 8 in Unit

5 (Students' Book) is designed for fluency purposes: students are fairly free to say what they want to say. You can make the task accuracy-oriented by asking students only to use certain structures.

#### (4) Classroom groupings and the mode of production

As can be seen from the Students' Book, some tasks are designed to be carried out in pairs or groups, others individually. You can change or rearrange the classroom groupings according to the particular teaching context. For example, Task 2 in Unit 5 (Students' Book) is designed to be completed by students working in pairs as it may be difficult if students work individually. However, if you think that individual work or group work is more appropriate to the particular class, you can change the suggested grouping.

Similarly, some tasks are designed to be done orally, others in writing. If the other mode is more suitable than the suggested one, again, you are encouraged to change the original mode. For example, Task 8 in Unit 5 (Students' Book) is designed to be done as oral work and in pairs. You can assign it to the students as written work to be done individually (e.g., ... write ten sentences about them ...) in class or as homework (in which case a 'follow-up' stage is necessary where feedback can be given).

(5) The use of the mother tongue

Although both you and your students are expected/encouraged to use English in the classroom, it does not mean that Chinese should be rejected at all times. For example, if a concept can be understood better when the explanation is in Chinese, then you are advised to use Chinese.

What are the recommended readings for the teacher?

There are numerous books and articles on communicative language teaching. You are expected to be familiar with the basic ideas and assumptions of the communicative approach. The following books are very useful:

Brumfit, C.J. (1984) Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brumfit, C.J. and K. Johnson (eds.) (1979) The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, K. (1982) Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology. Oxford: Pergamon.

Johnson, K. and K. Morrow (eds.) (1981) Communication in the Classroom. London: Longman.

Li, X.J. (1987) 'General introduction to CECL.' In X.J.

Li et al (1987-1989) Communicative English for Chinese Learners (Teacher's Handbook). Shanghai:

Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Littlewood, W. (1981) Communicative Language Teaching.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1989) Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1991) Language Teaching Methodology. London: Prentice Hall.

Richards, J.C. and T.S. Rodgers (1986) Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H.G. (1978) Teaching Language as Communication. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



## 2. UNIT 5: Comparison (Students' Book)

## UNIT 5: COMPARISON

## 1 Comparing Persons, Things and Situations

## 1.1 Comparatives

1.1.1 When we want to make comparisons between two persons, two things, or two situations, we can use the comparative form of the adjective.

## Task 1

(1) Look at the cartoons (C.M. Schulz, Peanuts. Fawcett Crest Editions, taken from CECL 1, p.176) below and decide what or who is being compared with what or whom.



(2) Look at the cartoons again and write down the positive forms of the adjectives used in the comparative structure.

(3) Work in pairs. Study the following examples and complete the table by writing the comparative forms of the adjectives (Do NOT write anything in the third column):

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
tall	taller	
happy	happier	
big	bigger	
beautiful	more beautiful	
warm		
lovely		
red		
interesting		

(4) Work in pairs. Some adjectives have irregular forms, e.g., good --> better --> best. Do you know the comparative forms of the following adjectives?

bad \_\_\_\_; little \_\_\_\_; much \_\_\_\_; far \_\_\_\_.

(5) Look at the cartoons again and write down the key word that links the two persons the girl is comparing. \_\_\_\_

1.1.2 If you want to express superiority or inferiority,

you can use the 'more ... than' (or '...-er than') or 'less ... than' patterns. For example:

The girl is taller than the boy.

The girl is more interesting than the boy.

The boy is less interesting than the girl.

If you want to express equality, you can use the 'as (so) ... as' pattern. For example:

Riding a horse is not as easy as riding a bicycle.

The boy is as old as the girl, but he is not so interesting as she is.

## Task 2

(1) Work in pairs. In the first three pictures of the cartoons in Task 1 the girl begins her utterances by saying 'My dad is ...'. Can you change the girl's utterance by saying 'Your dad is ...' without changing the basic meanings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Work in pairs. Discuss the difference in use between 'The boy is more interesting than the girl' and 'The girl is less interesting than the boy'. And decide when you choose to use the former/latter.

## Task 3

Comparatives can be used as complements after a link verb or as modifiers in front of a noun. Can you give some examples?

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If you can't, look at the cartoons in Task 1 again to find examples.

1.1.3 As we saw from the examples in the cartoons in Task 1, when we want to make comparisons, we should have a basis of comparison. For example, in 'John is more healthy than his brother', 'his brother' is the 'basis of comparison' (i.e., we compare John with his brother with respect to their health.).

## Task 4

Work in pairs. Look at the following cartoons (Evening News, Jan. 30 & Aug. 13, 1990) and say whether there are any comparisons being made. If yes, write down the implied bases of comparison.





1.1.4 Comparatives of adjectives can be premodified by words and phrases such as: much, rather, very much, a great deal, a lot, etc. For example:

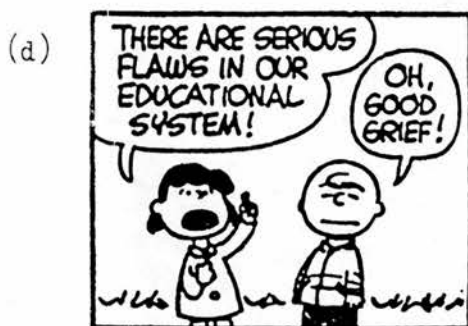
That job was (very) much easier than this one.

This film is a lot more interesting than the one we saw last week.

### Task 5

(1) Look at the cartoons (C.M. Schulz, 1969, All This and Snoopy, Too. Hodder and Stoughton: Coronet Books) below and see whether there is any word or phrase used to intensify (or modify) the comparative.





(2) Do you know why the boy used 'a little' whereas the girl 'a whole lot' ?

#### Task 6

The following are some advertisement headings. Work in groups. Read the headings and discuss what each advertisement is about.

- (1) If you want a cheaper pine bed, grow your own pine tree.
- (2) Make your home a hotter property from £950 with gas central heating.
- (3) Find a better sofa for less. We'll buy it for you.
- (4) TO CARRY MORE KGS. FOR LESS POUNDS.

#### Task 7

Read the following advertisement (adapted from Evening News, Feb. 28, 1991) for one minute and decide what comparisons are being made. Then read it again and list at least 4 features that are being compared.

BETTER. BRIGHTER. MORE COLOUR.  
IN YOUR NEW LOOK EVENING NEWS ON SATURDAY

Weekends are different. Time to relax. Time to enjoy the good things in life. Extensive research tells us that readers would prefer a smaller page format on a Saturday. We listen. So this weekend we are going to give you a super new-size Evening News that's easier to read, easier to handle, harder to put down! It's smaller in one way but much bigger in every other ... more news, features and sport. Plus a big, bright TV and leisure section with bags of colour.

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### Task 8

Work in pairs. Look at the prices (RMB¥ = Renminbi Yuan) of the washing-machines made in China and try to say something about each one of them, using the comparatives if possible.

Weili: RMB¥700

Zhangshan: RMB¥570

Waves: RMB¥530

Xuehua: RMB¥400

Panda: RMB¥400

Lotus: RMB¥360

## 1.2 Superlatives

1.2.1 If you want to compare more than two persons, things or situations, you can use the superlative form of the adjective. For example:

Martin is the tallest of all the students in the class.

France is the largest country in Europe.  
With 'short' adjectives, we add '-est' to the adjective to form the superlative; with 'long' ones, we use 'most' before the adjective.

### Task 9

Turn to Page 594 and complete the third column in (3), Task 1.

1.2.2 The common construction of the superlative is: 'A + be + the most + adjective (n) + of/in-phrase' (or 'A + be + the adj.-est (n) + of/in-phrase'). For example:

Tom is the youngest (boy) in the class.

Tom is the most intelligent of all the boys.

However, we sometimes use a clause instead of the 'of/in-phrase', for example:

This is the most interesting film I have ever seen.

### Task 10

The following tables are about countries with the largest populations and areas. Work in pairs and say something about each country by using the comparative and the superlative.



## 1. Countries with the largest populations

COUNTRY	POPULATION (in 1982)
China	1,031,882,511
India	667,326,000
U.S.A.	222,020,000
Indonesia	148,085,000
Brazil	119,175,000
Japan	115,880,000
Bangladesh	88,092,000
Pakistan	84,075,000
Nigeria	74,595,000

## 2. Countries with the largest areas

COUNTRY	AREA (sq. km)
Canada	9,956,709
China	9,600,000
U.S.A.	9,363,000
Brazil	8,511,965
Australia	7,704,000
India	2,952,400
Argentina	2,776,656
Sudan	2,505,800
Indonesia	2,400,000

## 2 Giving Information About Manner, Time and Place

- 2.1 If you want to express how something happens/happened or is/was done with respect to how it does/did or is/was done on a different occasion (e.g., manner, time, place), then you can use adverbs in the comparative or superlative.

### Task 11

Can you write down the comparative and superlative forms of the adverbs in the following?

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
hard		
soon		
brightly		
carefully		
accurately		

- 2.2 The formation of the comparative and the superlative of the adverb is similar to that of the adjective. However, if the adverb has two syllables and ends in 'ly', usually we do not use '-er' and '-est' to form the comparative and superlative. On the other hand, some adjectives and adverbs have the same form, and some adverbs have irregular forms.

## Task 12

(1) The following are some adverbs and adjectives. Can you distinguish them and write down their comparative and superlative forms? (The first one was done for you.)

Positive	part of speech	Comparative	Superlative
small	adj.	smaller	smallest
seldom			
lively			
quickly			
brightly			
funny			

(2) There are a number of irregular adverbs, for example: well --> better --> best. Do you know the irregular forms of the following adverbs? Work in pairs and write down the irregular comparative and superlative forms of the adverbs.

badly	_____	_____
far	_____	_____
little	_____	_____
much	_____	_____
well	_____	_____

## Task 13

(1) Look at the following cartoons (Evening News, April 9 & July 21, 1990) and say what are being compared.



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 -----  
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(2) Can you write down the pattern used in the comparison: \_\_\_\_\_

2.3 Comparison of adverbs, like that of adjectives, has the following patterns: the 'more ... than' ('-er ... than') or 'less ... than' and the 'as ... as' structures, which are used to express the comparative. For example:

Tom loves Scotland more than his girl-friend does.

The morning train travels as fast as the afternoon one.

If the comparison involves more than two events, occasions, etc., we can use the superlative form.

For example:

Tom works (the) hardest of all the workers.

The structure of the superlative is: '(the) ... of/in'.

- 2.4 As the examples show, when we make comparisons, we usually use a phrase or clause to introduce the basis of comparison. [cf. >1.1.3]

#### Task 14

Look at the cartoons (Sunday Mail, April 8, 1990; Evening News, Jan. 15, 1990) and decide what the bases of comparison are.

(b)

(a)



- 2.5 Contrasted Comparatives: If you want to express that one amount of a quality or thing is linked to another amount, you can use two contrasted comparatives with the pattern 'the ... the ...'.

For example:

The more she thinks of him, the more she loves

him.

The less you worry about the result, the better you will perform.

The contrasted comparatives involve not only adverbs but also adjectives. For example, in 'The more famous she becomes, the higher the prices of her pictures become', both comparatives are adjectives.

In some situations we do not use any verbs in the contrasted comparatives structures if the meaning is clear from the context. For example:

The sooner the better.

The brighter the light, the darker the lens.

#### Task 15

Can you express the ideas in the following sentences in English?

- (1) 人越老越聪明。
- (2) 你越坚定，他就会越害怕。
- (3) 她见他越多，越不喜欢他。
- (4) 他做得越多越高兴。
- (5) 越多越好。

2.6 Sometimes we can use the comparison of the adjective or the adverb to express almost the same ideas. For example, 'Mary is a more beautiful dancer than Jane

is' and 'Mary dances more beautifully than Jane does' are similar in meaning although in the former we make the comparison between the persons while in the latter between the ways of dancing.

### Task 16

(1) The following cartoons (People's Daily -- Overseas edition, Dec. 15, 1990) are satires on 'putting the cart before the horse'. Work in groups and discuss what each of the cartoons means. Use comparisons of the adjective and the adverb where appropriate.



(2) Write (a) a short paragraph about each of the satires or (b) a title for each satire.

3. Unit 5: Notes on 'Comparison'  
(Teacher's Handbook)

Unit 5: Notes on 'Comparison'  
(Unit 5, Students' Book)

1 Introduction

This is the unit concerned with 'comparison' of adjectives and adverbs (see Unit 5, Students' Book). The unit is made up of two sections, the first of which deals with comparisons of adjectives (comparisons between persons, things and situations) while the second covers comparisons of adverbs (giving information about manner, time and place).

As comparisons of adjectives and adverbs are not new to the students, focus should be put on the communicative functions of the structures of comparison. It is advisable to emphasise the functions of the structures rather than their formations. Some tasks are designed for warm-up purposes; others are designed for elicitation rather than presentation. Although the answers to the exercises/activities are provided, it is hoped that you, the teacher, will go through the tasks yourself and work out your own answers before you give the lesson, because by doing so you will understand the exercises/activities better. Moreover, you are not expected to give your students answers in an easy and straight-forward way but to elicit them from the students or help them to work the



answers out themselves.

Although the description and explanation are in the course book you are advised to read (say) it to the students and study it with them. This suggestion also applies to the instruction in the task.

## 2 Comparing Persons, Things and Situations

### 2.1 Comparatives

#### Task 1

This task is designed for warm-up purposes. The first phase begins with 'use' and helps to motivate the students. The cartoon is taken from CECL 1.

The second phase brings us to the formation of the comparative. The three positive forms are: tall, broad, good-looking, the last one of which is irregular.

The third phase focuses on the comparative forms. It is a kind of 'review' as students may have no problems at all. Therefore, do not spend too much time on this phase. As our present interest is in the comparative form, do not ask students to write anything about the superlative. The other comparative forms are: warmer, lovelier, redder, more interesting.

The fourth phase is about the irregular forms of some adjectives: worse, less, more, farther/further.

The last phase of this task helps to bring students' attention from the formation of the comparative adjective

to the pattern 'more ... than' (or '...-er than'). The key word is 'than'.

## Task 2

The first phase of this task is designed to focus on meaning rather than form. The kind of 'transformation' involved in this task is covertly exemplified in the preceding description (i.e., 1.1.2, Unit 5: The girl is more interesting than the boy. --> The boy is less interesting than the girl). If you think students may have problems, give them an example (or examples) and/or remind them of the transformation before they begin the production (writing). The sentences students are expected to write are: 1. Your dad is shorter than my dad; Your dad is not so tall as my dad; Your dad is less tall than my dad. 2. Your dad has narrower shoulders than my dad. 3. Your dad is not so good-looking as my dad; Your dad is less good-looking than my dad. These are suggested answers only, as other sentences are also acceptable; and the spaces provided are suggested, too. If students produce sentences such as 'Your dad is not as handsome as my dad' and 'Your dad's shoulders are not as broad as my dad's', do not correct them because they are grammatical too.

In the second phase of the task, if the students do not know the difference in use between 'My dad is taller than your dad' and 'Your dad is shorter than my dad', you may help them to discover the difference or simply tell

them about it. The difference is discussed in the Reference Book (1.1.6, Chapter 5: Form and meaning).

### Task 3

This task is about the grammatical functions of the comparative. If students do not know (or have forgotten) what 'complement' and 'modifier' means, explain them to students (and also give the Chinese translation) and/or simply do the task with them (by elicitation).

### Task 4

The focus of this task is on meaning. First let students decide whether there are any comparisons being made. Go around the class while the pair-work is going on and give help if necessary. The implied bases of comparison are: When I feel better than now; Your school reports are getting worse than before.

### Task 5

The focus of this task is on both form and meaning. The use of 'a little' and 'a whole lot' shows the different ways of looking at the same thing.

### Task 6

This task mainly focuses on use, as students' attention is directed to the content of each advertisement. The use of the comparative in the headings suggests that something is being compared though

not explicitly. The advertisements are about:

- (1) advertising pine beds: 'Get along to BED WORLD today. You won't find quality pine beds at prices like ours anywhere in London. ...'
- (2) advertising gas: 'For only £950 you can enjoy all the comfort of cosy Gas central heating, with our low cost package that includes 3 radiators, a wall mounted boiler and domestic hot water. ...'
- (3) advertising sofas: '(a) ETON, 3 seater suite, WAS £749, NOW £699, SAVE £50. (b) EXCALIBUR, 3-seater leather suite, WAS £2099, NOW £1899, SAVE £200. ...'
- (4) advertising mini-trucks: '... The Fiorino takes a class-winning 95.3 cu.ft., 470 kgs. load. 0% finance over 12 months. Or from £121 a month at special low interest rates if you choose a longer term. ...'

When the students are discussing/guessing the content of each advertisement, go around the class and be ready to facilitate the group discussion. At the follow-up stage, you may want to ask students to report their work. You may also like to remind students of the language in these advertisements (e.g., the use of imperative structures and elliptical sentences), which may be stylistically different from that of other discourse types.

**Task 7**

The goal of this task is to help students to scan the comparative features and to understand the nature of comparison. It is both form-focused and meaning-focused. The comparison is made between the present (big) format and the future (small) format. Possible comparative features include: The new format is smaller than the present one; it is easier to read, easier to handle, but harder to put down; it is brighter, better-looking; it offers more news, more information, more colour, etc. These features fall into different types: e.g., size, colour, readability, attractiveness, etc.

**Task 8**

The focus of this task is on meaning, although form and use are also involved. Students are quite free to say what they would like to say. It is expected that students will use sentences such as: X is more expensive than Y, X is less expensive than Y, Y is cheaper than X, Y is as expensive/cheap as Z, (or even) If you want to buy Weili, you have to spend more money; Weili is the most expensive of all. etc. In fact, it is hoped that students at this stage may feel like using the superlative, which helps us to move our focus to the superlative which immediately follows this task. If you think that students have difficulties in doing the task, you may give them some examples before asking them to carry out the task.

## 2.2 Superlatives

### Task 9

This task is about the formation of the superlative form. By this stage students should not have difficulties in forming the superlative. The superlative forms of the adjectives in Task 1 are: tallest, happiest, biggest, most beautiful, warmest, loveliest, reddest, most interesting.

### Task 10

The focus of this task is on meaning as well as use. The two tables are taken from CECL 1 (p.317 & p.319). Students are quite free to choose what to say. This is a chance for students to review what they have learned by using comparisons of the adjective. If you think that students may have difficulties in saying the numbers, you can write the ways of saying numbers on the blackboard or simply ask them to ignore the exact numbers in their interaction (e.g., Simply say 'China has a larger population than India' or 'The population in China is larger than that in India'). A number above a thousand such as 546,085,609 is read as (from CECL 1, p.315): five hundred and forty-six million eighty-five thousand six hundred and nine. (Ask students to consult the Reference Book about the reading of numbers.)

### 3 Giving Information About Manner, Time and Place

#### Task 11

This task is about the formation of the comparative and superlative forms of the adverb. Since it is similar to the formation of comparative and superlative forms of the adjective, students should have no problems with it. Therefore, do not spend too much time on this task.

#### Task 12

The first phase of the task aims to help students to realise the difference between adjectives and adverbs. As students may find it easy to do the task, go over it quickly.

The second phase aims to remind students of the irregular forms of some adverbs. The comparative and the superlative forms of these irregular adverbs can be found in the Reference Book [see>1.2.2, Chapter 5].

#### Task 13

This task provides examples of the comparison of adverbs and aims at eliciting the comparison construction from the students. As students have just learned the comparison of adjectives, they should be able to do the task easily.

#### Task 14

This task focuses on meaning. As a similar task

(Task 4) was given earlier, students should find it easy to do this task. The implied bases of comparison are: The doctor said I should live on greens more than before; I hope you'll do better in the exams this year than you did last year/before.

#### Task 15

This is a translation task which focuses on form and meaning. The possible English versions are: (1) The older people are, the wiser they become. (2) The firmer you are, the more frightened he will be. (3) The more she sees of him, the more she dislikes him. (4) The more he does, the happier he is. (5) The more the merrier.

#### Task 16

This task focuses on use. It is hoped that students would use both comparisons of adjectives and adverbs in their discussion. Students are quite free to use any forms to express their understandings and opinions. At the first phase, your concern should be with their discussion and the process of production rather than the product. The second phase of the task aims at the product of the discussion. It can be assigned as homework.

The following are possible summaries of each satire.

(1) Doing business is more profitable than farming.  
/ You earn more in transportation than in farming. /  
Nowadays it is easier to become rich if you go into



business.

(2) The singer becomes famous more easily than the composer. / It is more glamorous to be a singer than a composer. / The composer earns less than the singer.

(3) The producer receives less than the middleman. / The best way to become rich is to do business. / Mental work is more profitable than manual work.

(4) You can get more if you are not honest. / It is stupid to be honest since honesty is not the best policy. / A tame monkey receives less than a wild one.

#### 4. Chapter 5: Comparison (Reference Book)

### CHAPTER 5: Comparison

#### 1.1 Comparing Persons, Things, and Situations

##### 1.1.1 Introduction

If you want to say that someone/something has more of a quality than someone/something else, you can use the comparative or superlative forms of adjectives. For example:

This vase is lovelier than that one. (1)

John is more intelligent than Mary. (2)

Riding a horse is not so/as easy as riding  
a bicycle. (3)

Of all the vases, this one is the most  
beautiful. (4)

In (1), two things (vases) are compared; in (2) two persons are compared, and in (3) two actions are compared; in (4) more than two things are compared. Usually, only qualitative adjectives [see>Chapter 7] have comparative and superlative forms.

##### 1.1.2 Formation of Degree of Comparison

(1) With adjectives of one or two syllables, the comparative is formed by adding '-er' and the superlative by adding '-est'. For example:

cold -- colder -- coldest

clear -- clearer -- clearest

(2) However, if the adjective ends in '-y', we first change 'y' to 'i' and then add '-er' or '-est'. For example:

busy -- busier -- busiest

sunny -- sunnier -- sunniest

pretty -- prettier -- prettiest

(3) When a one-syllable adjective contains one vowel letter which is followed by a single consonant, we first double the consonant and then add '-er' or '-est'. For example:

big -- bigger -- biggest

hot -- hotter -- hottest

Compare:

thick -- thicker -- thickest

(4) If there is a mute '-e' at the end of the word, we only add '-r' or '-st'. For example:

ripe -- ripier -- ripest

fine -- finer -- finest

polite -- politer -- politest

(5) When an adjective ends with the sound [ ], we add the sound [g] in the comparative and superlative forms. For example:

long [lɔŋ] --> longer ['lɔŋgə] -->

longest ['lɔŋgist]

young [jʌŋ] --> younger ['jʌŋgə] -->

youngest ['jʌŋgist]

(6) When an ending 'r' or 're' is not sounded in the

positive form, it is sounded in the comparative and superlative. For example:

near [niə] --> nearer ['niərə] -->

nearest ['niərist]

clever [klevə] --> cleverer ['klevərə] -->

cleverest ['klevərist]

pure [pjʊə] --> purer ['pjʊərə] -->

purest ['pjʊərist]

(7) There are some adjectives that have irregular forms. The following are the common ones.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad (ill)	worse	worst
little	less (lesser)	least
near	nearer	nearest (next)
much (many)	more	most
far	farther(further)	farthest (furthest)
late	later (latter)	latest (last)
old	older (elder)	oldest (eldest)

(8) Usually, with adjectives of one or two syllables, we use the inflected forms (i.e., '-er' and '-est'), as indicated in (1) above. However, there are some exceptions:

(a) With adjectives derived from past participles (e.g., bored, pleased) and those beginning with 'a-' (e.g., afraid, aware) [see>Chapter 7], we use 'more' and 'most' in the comparative and the superlative;

(b) Some three-syllable adjectives which are prefixed by 'un-' can also take the inflected form (e.g., unhappy -- unhappier -- unhappiest);

(c) A number of two-syllable adjectives use either '-er'/'-est' or 'more'/'most' to form comparisons. Therefore, if you are not sure whether to use '-er'/'-est' or 'more'/'most' in such cases, the safe way is to use the latter.

### 1.1.3 Superiority and Inferiority

#### 1.1.3.1 Superiority

If you want to express the meaning that someone/something is superior to someone/something else in relation to their position on a scale of degree or amount, you can use the structure:

A + be + adj. + -er + than + B (be)

A + be + more + adj. + than + B (be)

For example:

Today is hotter than yesterday.

He is a better writer than she is.

This book is more interesting than that one.

As the examples show, the comparative can occur as a complement after a link verb or as a premodifier. If you want to compare more than two persons/things, you can use the superlative form. The structure is as follows:

A + be + the adj. + -est + in/of + B

A + be the most + adj. + in/of + B

For example:

John is the tallest of the boys.

The Sahara is the biggest desert in the world.

Tom is the most intelligent (boy) in the class.

You can place the 'of/in-phrase' at the beginning of the clause for emphasis [see>Chapter 35]. If you use the 'of-phrase', you use a plural noun phrase (as 'the boys' in the above example); if you use the 'in-phrase', you use a singular noun phrases (as 'the class' in the above example).

#### 1.1.3.2 Inferiority

If you want to say that someone/something is inferior to someone/something else with respect to their position on a scale of degree or amount, you can use the structure:

A + be + less + adj. + than + B (be)

For example:

Susan is less beautiful than Mary

This story is less funny than that one.

If you compare more than two persons/things, you can use the structure:

A + be + the least + adj. in/of + B

or A + be + the least + adj. + clause

For example:

Jane is the least clever of all the girls.

This is the least difficult book I've ever read.

The 'in/of-phrase', like that in the pattern of superiority [see>Chapter 5], can be placed at the beginning of the clause for emphasis.

#### 1.1.3.3 Equality

When we want to express equal comparison, we can use the 'as ... as' structure:

A + be + as + adj. + as + B (be)

For example:

John is as clever as Mary.

This book is as interesting as that one.

If you want to negate equal comparison, you use 'not as ... as' or 'not so ... as':

John is not as clever as Mary.

This book is not so interesting as that one.

#### 1.1.4 The Basis of Comparison

If we want to make comparisons, we must have the basis of comparison, which is given in the 'than' and 'as' clause or the 'of/in-phrase'. For example, in 'Jane is older than Mary', the basis of comparison is 'Mary'. That is, we compare Jane with Mary with respect to their age. Generally speaking, any comparison must have a basis of comparison, without which any comparison would be impossible. However, the basis of comparison need not be overtly expressed on all occasions but can be implied from the context. For example:

Son: Gosh, I felt awful when I got up.

Mother: But you feel better now that you've had  
some breakfast.

Son: Yes, it's given me enough strength to climb  
back into bed.

(Evening News June 28, 1988)

In the mother's utterance, the comparison is made without specifying the basis of comparison. However, it is implied: 'than before you had some breakfast'. It is important to remember that in some cases (such as the above example) the overt expression of the basis of comparison is redundant or may make the utterance clumsy or even unacceptable.

#### 1.1.5 Form and Meaning

As we saw in Chapter 1, sometimes we can use more than one form to express the 'same' meaning. When we make comparisons, we can use different structures to mean the same thing. For example, to say

John is taller than Jane. (1)

means

Jane is not as tall as John. (2)

and Jane is shorter than John. (3)

and Jane is less tall than John. (4)

However, in (1) the starting point is 'John' whereas in (2), (3), and (4) the topic is 'Jane'. The choice of 'John' or 'Jane' as theme [see>Chapter 35] is determined by the distribution of given and new information. For



example, in the cartoons [see#1.1, Task 1, Unit 5], the little girl's starting point is 'my dad':

My dad is taller than your dad.

My dad has broader shoulders than your dad.

My dad is better-looking than your dad.

It would sound odd if we changed the second or third utterance into 'Your dad has narrower shoulders than my dad' or 'Your dad is not so good-looking as my dad', although the meanings are the same.

Although 'John is taller than Jane' and 'John is less short than Jane' can be used to express the same meaning, they have different implications. In 'John is taller than Jane', nothing is implied about their tallness: it may be that both of them are tall; equally it may be that both are short. Similarly, when we say 'How old is the baby?' we do not mean that he is old. But we do not normally say 'How young is the baby?' as 'young' is marked [see>Chapter 35]. However, in 'John is less short than Jane', the implied meaning is that both John and Jane are short.

On the other hand, the same meaning can be expressed by using different comparative structures. For example, when we want to compare someone's age to more than two persons, we can, by using the superlative, say, for example,

John is the tallest in the class.

Or we can simply use the comparative form:

John is taller than any of the others in the

class.

### 1.1.6 Than -- preposition or conjunction?

As we see from the above examples, the clause which follows 'than' and 'as' is not complete. Traditionally, the 'than-clause' and 'as-clause' are treated as a kind of adverbial clause. [see>Chapter 21] When 'than' or 'as' is followed by a personal pronoun [see>Chapter 3] only, we have to make a choice between the subjective case (e.g., we, I, he) and the objective case (e.g., us, me, him). Do we say 'John is older than I (am)' or '... than me'? In formal English, the subjective form is preferred whereas in informal situations the objective form is more usual. The problem will be avoided if the pronoun is followed by an auxiliary verb or a link verb [see>Chapter 8], as we say 'John is older than I am' and not '\*John is older than me am/is'. Modern grammarians tend to regard 'than' and 'as' as conjunctions when there is a verb in the clause but treat them as prepositions when there is only a noun phrase (including a pronoun) [see>Chapter 3] following 'than' or 'as'.

### 1.1.7 Premodification of Comparatives

Comparatives (whether taking the inflected form or 'more') can be premodified by amplifiers or intensifiers such as 'much', 'very much', 'somewhat', 'rather', 'a lot', 'a great/good deal', etc. For example,

This room is (very) much bigger than the one we

have.

Jane was a lot more intelligent than we thought.  
It is rather nicer to do the work with someone  
than to do it alone.

## 1.2 Giving Information About Manner, Time and Place

### 1.2.1 Introduction

When we hope to say how something happens/happened or is/was done on a different occasion in relation to manner, time, frequency, duration, and place, we can use adverbs in the comparative or superlative. For example:

Martin speaks more quickly than his brother.

(manner)

Susan dresses as smartly as Ann.

Bob ran fastest of all yesterday

Of all the boys in the class, John works (the)  
hardest.

We'll go there as early as we did last time.

(time)

They come to see us less frequently than before.

(frequency)

I have known her longer than you have. (duration)

Tom can climb higher than any of the other boys.

(place)

### 1.2.2 Formation of Degree of Comparison

The formation of the comparative and superlative of

adverbs is similar to that of adjectives.

(1) With one-syllable adverbs, we form the comparative and superlative by adding '-er' and '-est'.

(2) With adverbs of more than one syllable, we use 'more' and 'most' to form the comparative and superlative. However, there are exceptions; for example, 'early' takes '-er' and '-est' rather than 'more' and 'most'.

(3) Adverbs which have the same form as adjectives take the same comparatives and superlatives as the adjectives; these words include: early, fast, hard.

There are, however, few irregular adverbs, e.g.,

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
badly	worse	worst
far	further/farther	furthest/farthest
little	less	least
much	more	most
well	better	best

### 1.2.3 Three Basic Structures

As the examples in Section 1.2.1. above show, comparison of adverbs, like that of adjectives, has three basic structures: (1) 'more ... than' (or '...-er than'); (2) 'as ... as'; (3) '(the) most ... of/in' (or (the) ...-est of/in').

When we want to make a comparison, we usually specify the basis of comparison in the 'than' and 'as'

clause or the 'of/in-phrase'. However, when the basis of comparison is clear from the context, there is no need to overtly express the basis [see>1.1.4, Unit 5]. For example,

I'll ask him about it later, when I know him  
better. (1)

We may learn more quickly by attending  
classes. (2)

He likes you the best. (3)

In the first example, the implied contrast is: 'than I do now'; in the second example, the implied contrast may be: 'than now, i.e., than before attending classes'; in the last example, the implied contrast is: 'of all other people'.

#### 1.2.4 Contrasted Comparatives

In order to express the meaning that one amount of a quality or thing is linked to another amount, we can use two contrasted comparatives with the pattern 'the ... the ...'. For example,

The harder he tries, the better he works.

The less you meet him, the more you like him.

Comparative adjectives can be used in the same way. For example:

The older we are, the wiser we become.

The more difficult the tasks are, the less likely  
we are able to finish them in time.

Both comparative adjectives and adverbs can be used in the same sentence, as the following examples show:

The earlier we detect a problem, the easier it is  
to cure. (1)

The more angry he became, the more they laughed at  
him. (2)

In (1), the comparative in the first clause is an adverb whereas that in the second clause is an adjective; in (2), it is just the other way round.

In the structure of contrasted comparatives, the subject and/or verb of either or both of the clauses may be omitted if the meaning is clear. For example:

The larger the team, the stronger they seem  
to be. (1)

The sooner it is settled, the better. (2)

The brighter the light, the darker the lens. (3)

In (1), the verb (is) in the first clause is omitted; in (2) the subject and the verb (it will be) in the second clause are omitted; and in (3) the verbs in both clauses (is, become) are omitted. It should be noted that in some cases it is not easy to decide what has been omitted, as some contrasted comparatives behave like set phrases (or proverbs) (e.g., The sooner the better. The more the merrier).

The construction of contrasted comparatives is usually treated as a kind of adverbial clause -- an adverbial clause of proportion, as what is compared is circumstances in terms of equivalent tendencies. Some

grammar books regard the 'the' in this construction as an adverb while others regard it as a conjunction.

#### 1.2.5 Comparison of Adjectives and Adverbs

Although the comparison of adjectives is mainly used to compare persons, thing, and situations whereas the comparison of adverbs is mainly used to give information about manner, time and place, we nevertheless can use both types of comparison to express similar ideas. For example, 'Mary is a more beautiful dancer than Jane is' and 'Mary dances more beautifully than Jane does' are similar in meaning though in the former we make comparisons between persons while in the latter between the ways of dancing. Similarly, 'Mr Brown lectures better than Mrs Brown' and 'Mr Brown is a better lecturer than Mrs Brown' are similar in meaning. In real-world communication, the choice of the structure depends on many factors. Basically, the comparison of the adjective focuses on the 'state' (i.e., what kind of dancer/lecturer ...) whereas that of adverb on the 'action' (i.e., how does he do ...).

#### 1.2.6 The Comparative Clause

The 'than-clause' and the 'as-clause' in comparative structures are traditionally regarded as a kind of adverbial clause [see>Chapter 21]. Modern grammarians prefer to treat them as a separate kind of clause because both the main clause and the subordinate clause [see>

Chapter 2] are usually incomplete in themselves.

Compare:

He came to see me when he had problems. (He had problems. He came to see me.)

He is older than I am. (\*He is older. \*I am.)

On the other hand, the comparative clause has characteristics of both the relative clause [see>Chapter 23] and the adverbial clause [see>Chapter 21] in that it can modify a noun phrase as well as an adjective phrase and adverb phrase. For example:

John has more Spanish Friends than Bob. (1)

Jane is more healthy than Mary. (2)

In (1) what the 'more ... than' clause modifies or restricts is the noun phrase 'Spanish friends'; in (2) it modifies the adjective (phrase) 'healthy'. In (3) below, the 'so ... as' clause modifies or restricts the adverb (phrase) 'accurately':

George doesn't calculate so accurately as Tom.

### 1.3 Comparison Other Than Adjectives and Adverbs

Determiners and nouns such as 'many', 'much', 'few', 'little' can also have comparative and superlative forms.

For example:

There are more cars on the roads in summer than in winter. (determiner, the comparative form of 'many')

We have more time to do this task. (determiner,



the comparative of 'much')

Although many people support the new plan, more  
are against it. (noun, the comparative of  
'many')

He spends more of his time studying history than  
literature. (noun, the comparative of 'much')

They have visited most countries in Europe.

(determiner, the superlative of 'many')

He buys less beer and fewer cigarettes now.

(determiners, the comparative forms of  
'little' and 'few')